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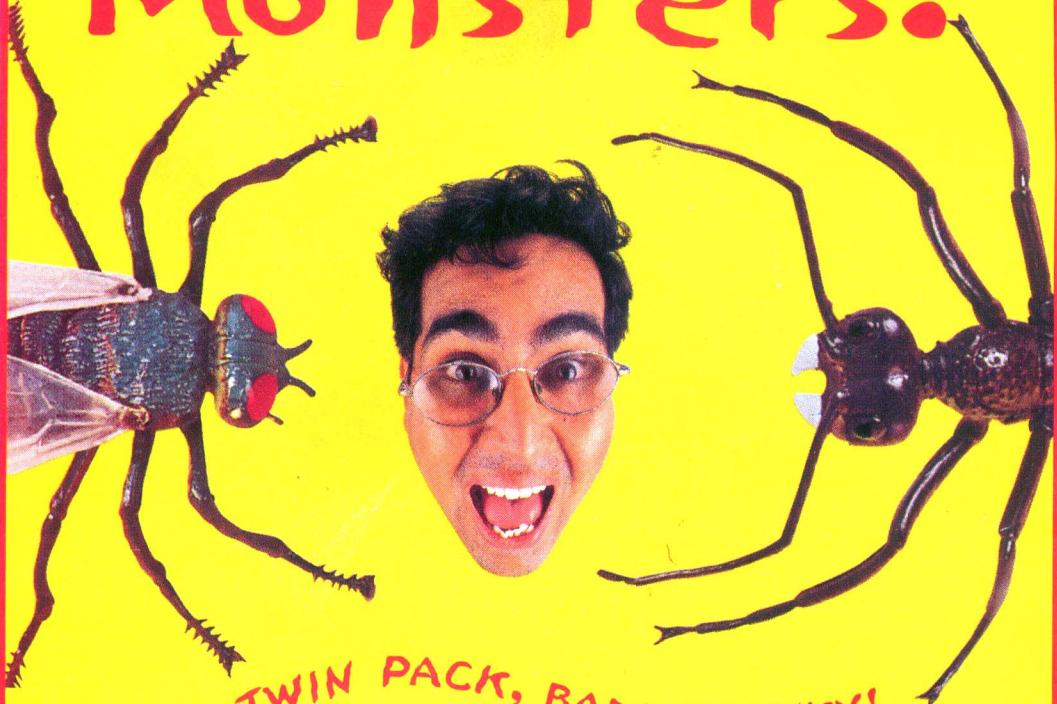
CHANDAMAMA



The Water
Sprinkling Festival
(Page 18)

MAHE...

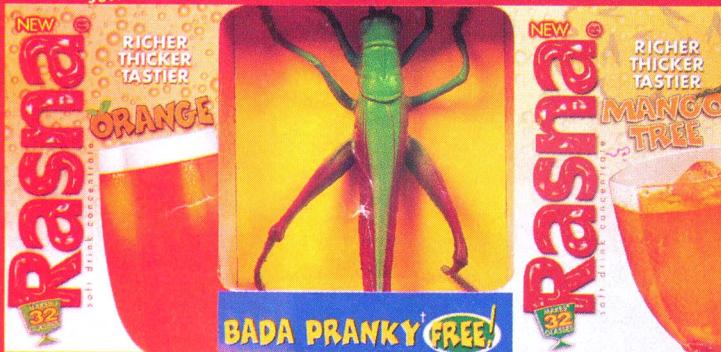
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CHANDAMAMA

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May 2001

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HIGHLIGHTS



Saga of India



Saga of
Vishnu



CONTESTS GALORE

Creative, challenging
and educative —
calling for your
participation.



BOSS



LAMBADA



PIRANHA



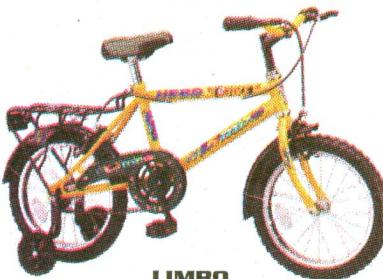
BUZZ



MISSILE



TERMINATOR



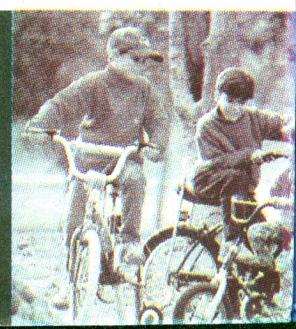
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B. Nagi Reddi and Chakrapani

They felt our pain

That Black Friday, when Gujarat was hit by the killer-quake, at most other places the people were in a jubilant mood as the country was celebrating the Republic Day. Once they were shaken by the news of the tragedy, they rushed whatever help they could. After all, the unfortunate ones were their own countrymen, and it was only natural that they went to their succour.

However, what had touched the heart of every Indian is how the hour of shock and sorrow brought our friends, both far and near, to extend a helping hand. Mr. George Bush had hardly settled down in office as the President of the USA when he said that "earthquakes know no political boundaries", and he had said all. The British Prime Minister Mr. Tony Blair assured India that "we stand ready to help in every way we can". The Pakistani Chief Executive Officer General Musharraf telephoned our Prime Minister, raising the hope that the telephone call might lead to a thaw in our relations with that country.

We desist from enumerating the names of a host of countries that had come to India's help, but what happened in a small school in Tokyo deserves re-telling. A 12-year-old 6th grader, Isona Kakuchi, who came to know of the Indian tragedy after the weekend recess, prompted her 20 odd classmates to break open their piggy-banks and hand over their modest savings to their teacher to be sent to India. "We feel your pain" ran the headline to this moving story.

We in *Chandamama*, along with our readers, will surely be grateful to all these *friends in need* who have proved to be *friends indeed*.

Wave Pool



Water Coaster



Water Scooter



White Water Ride



Chennai Kuthiram



Merry-go-round



Boating



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NATIONAL

Tourism hit in Gujarat

The earthquake that rocked Gujarat on January 26 has caused extensive damage. And now it has also affected the tourism and holiday patterns of the people of Gujarat.



Every year thousands of Gujaratis spend their summer vacations in countries like France and America. This year the outbound tourist rate, it is feared, may come down drastically because of the quake havoc. Travel agents feel that the bookings might fall by 40 per cent. Many families who had planned holidays abroad have been severely affected by the quake.

Noise affects your behaviour

Do you have problems in reading, memory, and concentration? Then check out your surroundings! According to a recent survey conducted by the World Health Organisation, prolonged or excessive

The Government of India has great news for those of you who aspire to go abroad for higher technical education. Students who wish to pursue their education can now get loans from banks up to Rs. 15 lakh for studies abroad and Rs. 7.5 lakh for studies within the country.

This was announced in the Union Budget for the year 2001-2002, which was presented to the Parliament by the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, on February 28.

Of special interest to children and youth will be the increase in the price of sugar, which will reflect in the price of chocolates, biscuits, and generally all items of sweetmeat.

At the same time, the prices of soft drinks have

exposure to noise can cause permanent health conditions



Union Budget: sops and sobs

been reduced to offset the cost of sugar used in the production of these drinks, which are a favourite with the younger generation. Children in the lower age group will be particularly happy over the reduction in the price of toys and footwear.

The increase in the postal rates will affect those who maintain pen-friendship and those getting books and periodicals through post. The cost of the competition post card has gone up to Rs. 5 from Rs. 4. Members of the youth will become more mobile as the price of two-wheelers has been reduced.

like hypertension and heart disease and also affect your day-to-day performance.

According to the WHO, noise above 80 decibels increases incidence of aggressive behaviour. In some cases it may also lead to temporary or permanent hearing impairment.

INTERNATIONAL

An Indian All England champion

Pullela Gopi Chand recently became the second Indian to become the All England Badminton champion. He did his country proud when he defeated Chen Hong of China in straight sets at Birmingham.



Gopi Chand is currently ranked number 10 in the world. Earlier in the semi-finals, he defeated the world top ranker, Peter Gade of Denmark.

The only other Indian to win this title is the legendary Prakash Padukone, who won the title in 1980. In his message, Prakash Padukone said: "Gopi's victory has proved that Indians can be world beaters. It's a fantastic achievement and a great day for Indian badminton."

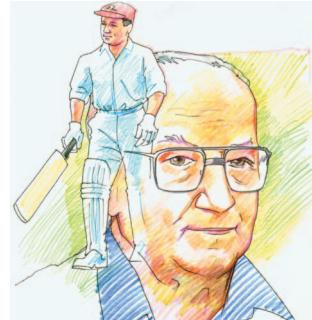
May 2001

Don will be missed

The cricket fever hots up. And as rival teams struggle to win international matches, one man, a colossus, will be missed. Sir Donald Bradman who has been called the greatest cricket phenomenon of the 20th century passed away recently. He scored 6,996 runs at a record Test average of 99.94. Don, as he was popularly known, had this average from just 52 Test matches.

Donald George Bradman was born on August 27, 1908 at Cootamundra, New South Wales, Australia. He was the youngest of five children. His father was a carpenter.

Don started playing cricket while he was at school. He used to practise



by throwing a golf ball against the base of a water tank and then hitting it with the stump.

Don made his debut in Test cricket against England in 1928 at Brisbane. From then on, there was no stopping him. In all, he scored 28, 607 runs in first class cricket. This total included 117 centuries in 338 innings.

In 1949, he was knighted for his services to cricket.

Buddha statues suffer damage

The tallest standing statue of the Buddha, and another world famous Bamiyan Buddha statue were recently destroyed by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The Taliban soldiers used missiles and anti-aircraft weapons to damage the two statues at Bamiyan.

The Taliban is the Islamic militia of Afghanistan. Their power extends across two-thirds of Afghanistan. Since 1994, their power had soared mercurially.

The Minister of Informa-

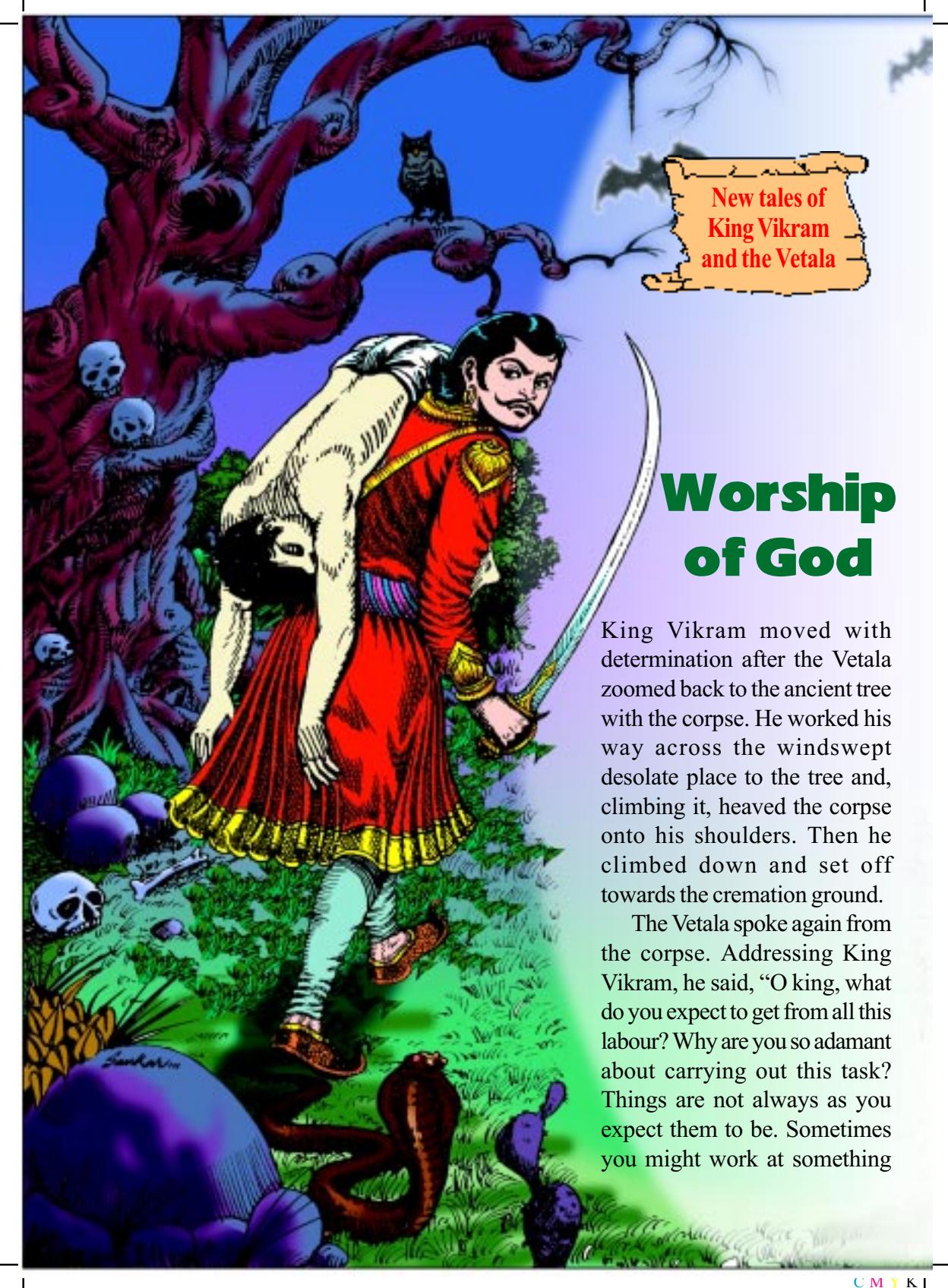


tion and Culture of the Taliban, Mawlawi Qudratullah Jamal, announced that they were destroying the "un-Islamic" ancient statues in the country.

The two Buddhist statues had been hewn from a cliff in the third and fifth centuries. The Bamiyan Buddhas, as these were popularly called, were restored in the 1960s by nine foreign countries!

The then Afghanistan government had thanked these countries for restoring their heritage!

Chandamama



New tales of
King Vikram
and the Vetala

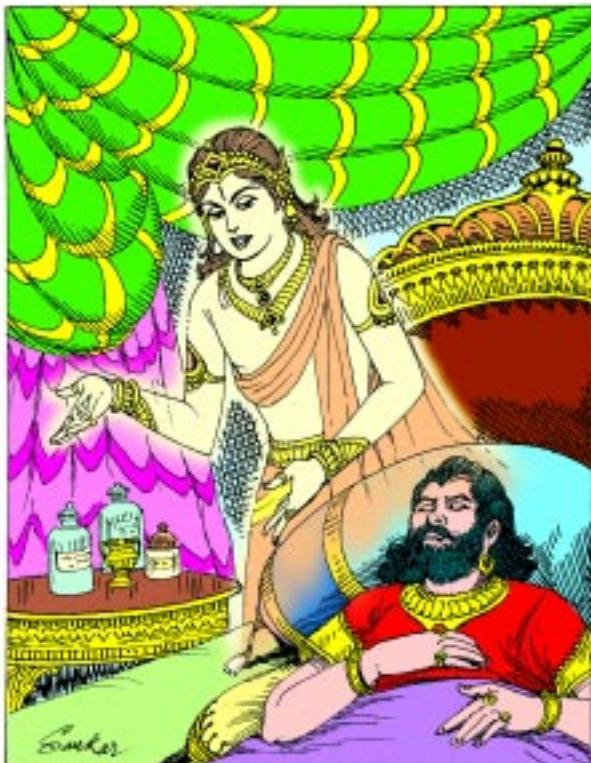
Worship of God

King Vikram moved with determination after the Vetala zoomed back to the ancient tree with the corpse. He worked his way across the windswept desolate place to the tree and, climbing it, heaved the corpse onto his shoulders. Then he climbed down and set off towards the cremation ground.

The Vetala spoke again from the corpse. Addressing King Vikram, he said, "O king, what do you expect to get from all this labour? Why are you so adamant about carrying out this task? Things are not always as you expect them to be. Sometimes you might work at something

with great patience and persistence only to find you were barking up the wrong tree. Listen to this story and be warned about doing anything with such single-minded purpose.”

The Vetal then began his narration: The King of Chakrapuri, Chandrasena, once fell very ill. Though the royal



doctors tried very hard and did everything possible, he did not get any better and was not able even to climb out of bed.

One night, as he lay in bed worrying about his illness, he dozed off into an uneasy sleep. He then had a dream in which a divine being appeared before

him. The divine being spoke to the king: “A king is responsible for the ills affecting his country. All is not well in your kingdom. Everyone has become very selfish, and there is a lot of harassment of ordinary people in the name of caste, creed, and religion. That is why you’ve fallen so ill.”

Chandrasena told the divine being that he would try to correct all that was wrong with the state, but first he had to get well in order to do that. “Please tell me how I can get better so that I can then deal with the problems in the kingdom,” he pleaded.

The divine being told him that just three leaves of the holy *tulsi* would cure him, but the leaves had to be handed to him by any holy man who for ten years would have continuously worshipped God. He should not have forgotten God for even one moment.

The next day the king called his ministers and told them about his dream. The ministers felt that there could be some truth in the matter and so set out to find such a holy man.

In a place called Sitapur there was a famous temple. At this temple a man, for thirty years, had not moved out but had remained worshipping God. People said he was immersed in devotion all the time. In fact, at some point he had felt that he had become impure and had come to this temple to ask God not only to make him pure

again but show some proof that he had become pure. He took a vow that he would not leave the temple till he received adequate proof. This man Ramachari had spent twelve years in the temple thinking of only God and waiting for proof.

Chandrasena's ministers heard about this man and felt he should be the one to give the *tulsi* leaves to the king. So they sent messengers to Sitapur. They did indeed find Ramachari in the temple, deep in prayer. But when they asked him to go with them to the capital to meet the king, Ramachari refused. He said he was bound by his vow.

The messengers even tried to tempt him with money and honours. Then they threatened him with dire consequences if he did not comply. Ramachari just refused to budge from his stance. The messengers were followed by the ministers to try and persuade him to come to Chakrapuri, but Ramachari merely said: "I've spent twelve years adhering to my vow and I don't wish to break it now. Why don't you bring the king here?"

One minister went on to suggest: "If you come to Chakrapuri and give the *tulsi* leaves to the king and he is cured, won't it be proof that you're pure? So, why don't you come to the capital with us?"

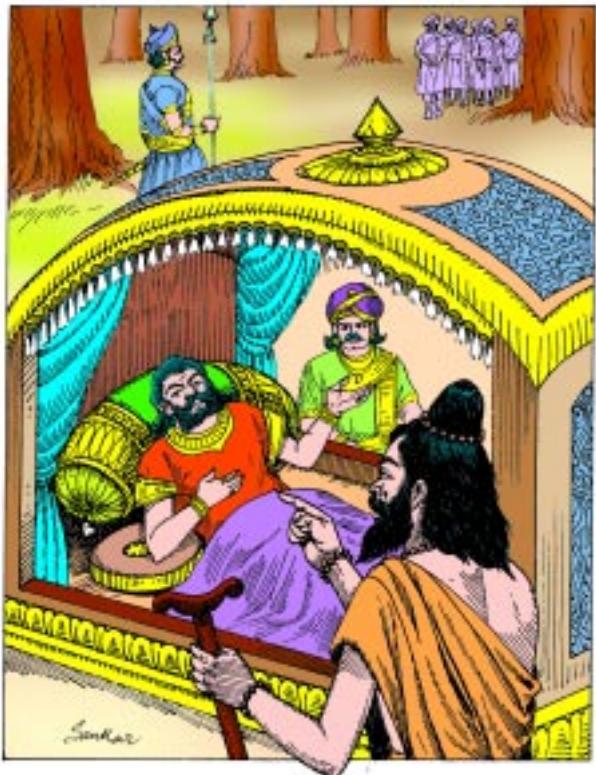
Ramachari still refused, saying he

could not even for a day leave the temple. The ministers then went back to the capital to report to the king. The king, who was willing to try anything to become well again, decided to go to the temple and meet Ramachari.

He then set off in a palanquin accompanied by a big retinue. Soldiers



led the procession and also followed at the rear. As the procession reached the borders of Sitapur, a strong gale blew up. The procession halted under a tree to take shelter from the storm. At that time, a yogi came that way. He went right up to the king. Somehow no one stopped him. When he came to the king,



he asked: "Where are you going, son?"

The king tried to get up but could not. The yogi told him not to strain but to tell him what the matter was. So the king told him about his illness and also what was taking him to Sitapur. The yogi listened to the whole tale and said: "Well, I've some *tulsi* leaves that can cure any disease. If you eat three of them you'll get completely cured."

The king hesitantly said: "Holy sire, my disease is peculiar. May I know if you have spent ten years in a temple thinking about God?"

The yogi said, "I'm a wandering monk."

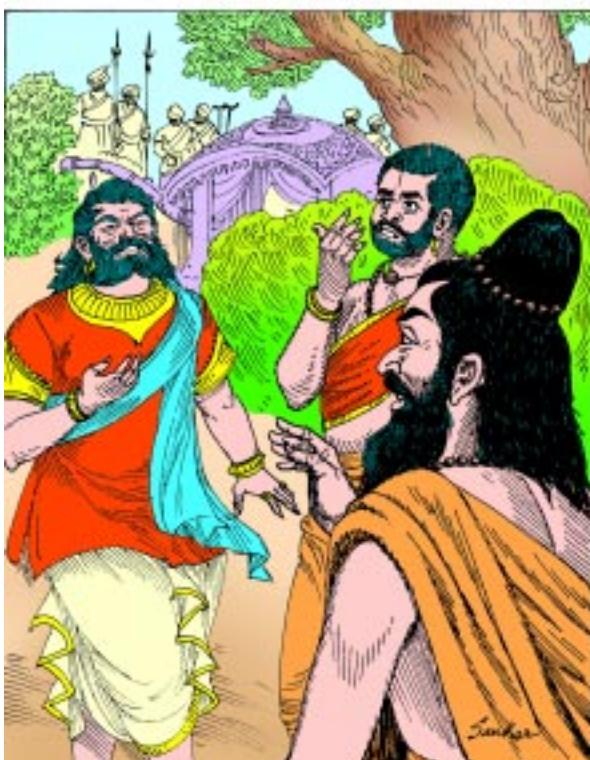
"Well, I've set out to meet Ramachari and maybe I should see him first," said the king.

The yogi said: "Well, I'm afraid you're going on a wild goose chase. Just eat the leaves I give and you can go back, hale and hearty."

A minister, who was listening to the whole conversation, told Chandrasena, "Let's not pay attention to someone whom we have not checked out. He may have evil ideas. I think we should proceed to the temple at Sitapur."

The king looked at the yogi helplessly and said: "I'm inclined to believe you, but would you please wait for me while I go to Ramachari and come back?" The yogi agreed.

The procession now proceeded to Sitapur. Ramachari gave King Chandrasena three *tulsi* leaves but, to



everyone's surprise, nothing happened. The king was still not able to move or get up. He told the crestfallen Ramachari: "Why don't you come with me to see the yogi?"

All of them then retraced their steps to where the yogi was waiting. The king ate the *tulsi* leaves the yogi gave him and in no time was miraculously able to get up and walk. Ramachari who was watching the proceedings was most discomfited and went home quite upset.

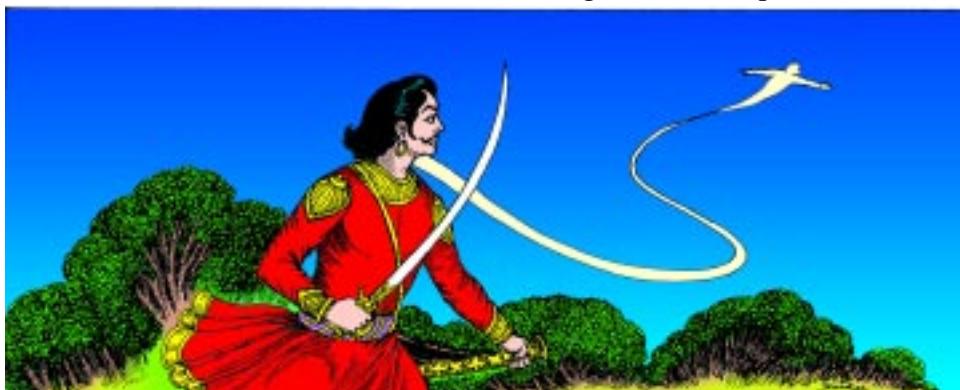
The Vetala stopped the story there and asked King Vikram: "For twelve years Ramachari had devoted himself to God without going home and yet the *tulsi* leaves he gave the king had no effect. Wasn't that odd? In the end, when the proof he was waiting for did not appear, he did not go back to the temple but went home. Why did he do that? Did he lose faith in God? On the other hand, look at that yogi; he would not have spent much time in meditating on God. Yet he was able to cure the

king. How was that? Answer me, O king, because if you know the answers to my questions and still prefer to keep mum, your head will break into a thousand pieces!"

King Vikram at once said: "It is not at all surprising. Ramachari was arrogant in a way. He felt that one should worship God only at a temple. Every other kind of worship, according to him, was worthless. However, when he could not help the king and he saw the yogi was able to cure him, he decided to go back home.

On the contrary, the yogi was a man who roamed all over and in his eyes, the world was itself a temple. A person who looks upon all creation as holy and is willing to absorb all the lessons it has, is a truly wise and knowledgeable person. That is why he was able to cure the king."

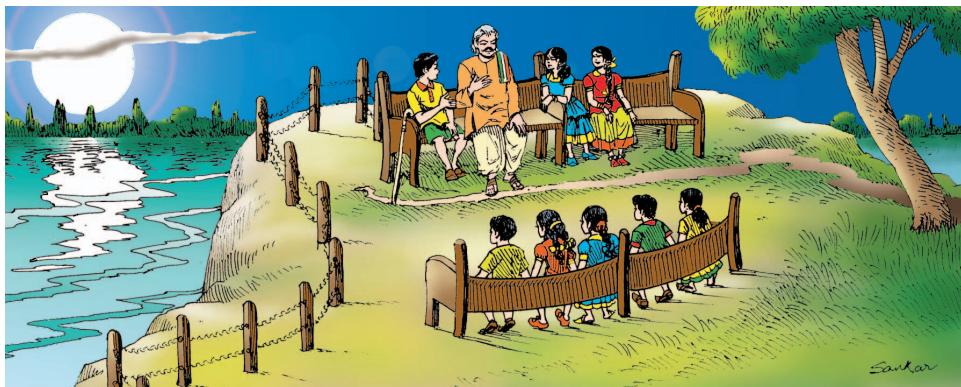
As soon as King Vikram stopped speaking, the Vetala in the corpse flew back to the ancient tree. King Vikram once again set off in pursuit.



Saga of India

Glimpses of a great civilisation –
its glorious quest for Truth through the ages

16. Conquerors of ego



“Grandpa, the story of King Harishchandra seems to have put us under a spell. We don’t even feel like getting up,” said Sandip gravely.

“Very well, then let me alone get up,” said the professor as he picked up his walking stick.

Everybody now stood up, laughing. “Should we take a detour and walk along the river-bank?” suggested the professor.

“That would be fine!” chorused several voices.

Soon they all were on the broad promenade running along the river. At the bend of the river, facing it were two cement benches placed in almost a semi-circle. A full moon had just

become visible on the horizon on the other side and the scene was serene and magnificent.

“Well, my good little friends, you won’t mind if I sit down? I would like to be here for a while. You’re free to go.”

“When you stood up, we all stood up; you chose to walk by the river and we followed. Shouldn’t we also sit down, when you sit down?” It was Sandip again. And all of them sat down, giggling, in support of Sandip’s suggestion.

“Grandpa, a rising full moon, a gurgling river, and the pleasant breeze are surely elements that go to make the right kind of atmosphere for

yet another session in story-telling!" said Chameli, leaning on the professor.

"The fact is, we're in a mood to learn more about our past. Our teachers tell us about the early invaders, the arrival of the Mughals, and whatever happened thereafter, but hardly anything about the episodes you narrate," remarked Sandip's friend, Raman.

"I don't blame your teachers, my boy; the fault is with the whole society. The tradition of teaching history, created by our colonial rulers, the British, still goes strong, except for some slight changes. It was natural for the colonial rulers to give us that much of history in comparison with which their rule would appear brighter. So, great events and great characters of antiquity were either ignored or labelled as mere mythological stories," observed Professor Devnath.

"The story of Harishchandra tells us how noble and humble a king could be despite the great power he enjoyed," said Chameli and asked, "Were there other kings with similar merit?"

"India had several kings who possessed power; power did not possess them. King Janaka was more of a rishi or a seer than a king. He had no ego. He looked upon himself as a servant of the Lord who had asked him to look after the people," remarked the professor.

"Grandpa, is it very difficult to be



devoid of ego?" asked Chameli's friend, Susmita.

"We had in our land mighty kings who had conquered their ego, and I can assure you that such conquests were greater achievements than the conquest of other kingdoms. Take the case of Janasruti. He would not go to sleep until all his officials roaming the kingdom had returned to the palace and reported that his subjects had no complaints."

Grandpa then narrated his story:

"Like now, that was a full moon night, a few thousand years ago. King Janasruti was enjoying a stroll on the terrace of his palace when he saw some silver-winged swans flying by. The king had an uncanny ability for understanding the meaning of bird's cries. One swan observed: 'I can see



a sweet light emanating from the mansion below. It is not any natural light, but supernatural. I wonder what could be its source.'

'The presence of King Janasruti is its source. He himself does not know that he radiates such an aura. He is great indeed,' responded a senior swan.

'I was trying to remember where I had seen a similar light. Yes, it was while flying over the palace of King Raikwa,' observed a third swan. 'That was even brighter,' he added.

"The swans disappeared," the professor continued the story. "What do you think was the reaction of King Janasruti? He enjoyed a very peaceful sleep, because he was now

aware that there was a nobler soul. In a few days he found out all about Raikwa. He then proceeded to meet him. Raikwa was young. King Janasruti proposed the marriage of his daughter, his only child, with the young king. Once the wedding had been performed, he handed over his kingdom to King Raikwa and retired to a hermitage for his spiritual pursuit."

"So, there were kings who valued honesty and truthfulness more than physical might," observed Raman.

"Indeed, and some of them would not hesitate to speak the truth even if they were to incur the wrath of the highest! King Haritasva, for example."

"Grandpa, please tell us the story of Haritasva," said Chameli.

Professor Devnath narrated that story, too:

King Haritasva was not only an ideal king, but a great singer - probably the greatest of all singers of his time. Once Sage Narada, himself a fine musician, happened to listen to him and was charmed. He told Brahma and his consort Saraswati about the king. They wanted the king to sing for them.

"Lord Vishnu, who sustains the universe, always has to remain vigilant. He rarely has any sleep. I wonder if you can lull him to sleep," said Brahma.

"I can try, my Lord," answered the king humbly.

His performance before Lord

Vishnu was duly arranged. Indeed, as the king sang, Vishnu fell asleep. Brahma was delighted. "I wish to grant you a boon. What would make you happy?" asked the great God.

"My greatest wish is to listen to the very source of all music, Lord Shiva. I don't know if I sound audacious," said the king.

At Brahma's appeal, Lord Shiva consented to sing for the mortal king. Gods and goddesses gathered to listen to the supreme singer. He sang in the raga *Shankarabharanam* and it was an enchanting experience for all. King Haritasva sat entranced even after the singing had ended.

When the other listeners woke him up, he looked rather bewildered. "But I thought the song was to continue..." he murmured.

"What made you think so?" he was asked.

"Well, for singing in *Shankarabharanam*, the singer must be in a perfect state of peace. But..."

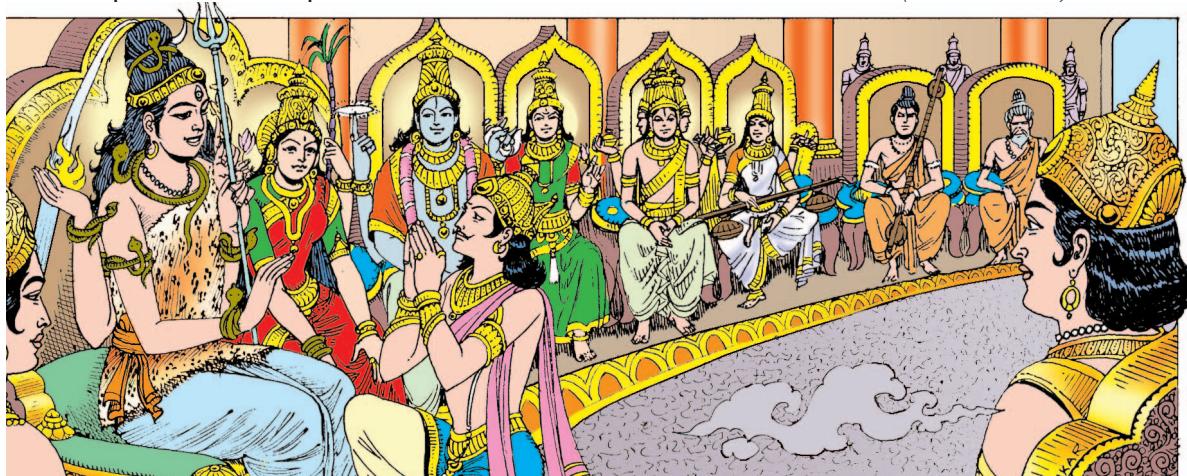
All were surprised. Did the king suggest that Shiva was not in the right mood while singing?

And Shiva's third eye opened up. As is well known, fire from the Lord's third eye could destroy anybody. Naturally everybody thought that the offended Shiva had burnt down his critic.

But it was not so. King Haritasva emerged rejuvenated, for the Lord had been pleased with his truthfulness and courage. The king prostrated before the compassionately smiling Lord. Shiva confessed to the fact that while singing He had for a moment nurtured doubts about his mortal listener's capacity to appreciate His music. That had deprived Him of the tranquillity necessary for a perfect demonstration of the raga.

Bathed in the fire from Lord Shiva's third eye, King Haritasva grew very powerful.

- Visvavasu
(To continue)



The Water Sprinkling Festival

Many years ago, the Dai people lived in a beautiful, green country in southern China. There was only one thing that made life almost impossible for the people there. Unfortunately, a terrible demon also lived there and he tyrannised the countryside. He would not let the Dais live in peace. He would kill them, take away their treasures or their relatives, and would not let them go about their business in peace.

Finally, the Dais met the demon and asked: "What do you want from us? Why do you trouble us all the time?"

The demon said: "All right, I won't trouble you, but you must give me your most beautiful girl every year." And he added: "If you agree to do that, then I shall not trouble you for the rest of the year. Otherwise, I shall destroy your whole village."

The people were aghast. How could they do that? But there was no other way. The demon would not listen to reason. If they refused, he would



just take away what or whoever he wanted.

So, every year one beautiful maiden was sent to the demon. As you can well imagine, no Dai girl thereafter wanted to be told she was beautiful.

A farmer and his wife lived near river Lancong. Their daughter, Yu Xiang, was truly a lovely girl. It is said she was so beautiful that even the peacocks were ashamed of spreading out their tails whenever she was around. As she went to fetch water from the river, the fish would leap up to catch a glimpse of her. Everyone in the village was sorry for her because they knew that one day she would have to be sent to the demon.

One day, Yu Xiang found her father sobbing disconsolately. "Why can't we kill the demon?" she asked.

"The demon is very strong and powerful," said her father through his sobs. "Our weapons don't work on him."

"Don't worry," said Yu Xiang. "I'll find a way to kill him."

Another day Yu Xiang found her mother crying as though her heart was breaking. Yu Xiang asked her mother,



“Why can’t we get together and kill the demon?”

“That horrible demon is very powerful,” said the mother through her tears. “Neither fire nor water works on him. We cannot do anything.”

“Don’t cry, mother,” said Yu Xiang confidently. “I’ll find a way to destroy that monster.”

At last, Yu Xiang was taken to the demon. The demon could not believe his eyes when he saw her.

He had not seen such beauty before. He was beside himself with joy when

he found that Yu Xiang was warm and friendly. However, she had a difficult time with the other girls who could not understand why Yu Xiang was friendly with the cruel monster who was keeping them in captivity. Yu Xiang paid no attention to them. She watched everything the demon did with great attention while she was with him. She wanted to see if she could find some weakness in him that she could use to kill him.

Her patience paid off one day, when she found the demon in a drunken stupor. He was surrounded by empty wine jars made of bamboo. The next time she saw the demon drinking, Yu Xiang was especially nice to him and poured him cup after cup of wine. The demon was very pleased with Yu Xiang and drank all that she gave him. He then told Yu Xiang, “You’re a good girl and I shall tell you a secret. Everyone thinks I cannot be destroyed but there is a way to do it. I’ll tell you, if you promise not to tell anyone.”

When Yu Xiang promised, he told her the secret and then fell asleep

Chandamama

completely drunk.

Then Yu Xiang decided to see if the demon had told her the truth. She plucked one of her long hair and wound it around the demon's neck. Then she tugged at the end she held sharply. The demon's head rolled off as though it had been cut with a sword. Yu Xiang had really killed the demon! But the demon's head turned into a large ball of fire and rolled towards the village. As the head rolled, it set fire to everything on its way. Yu Xiang knew that if she did not do something at once, the villages and fields and even the forests around would be destroyed.

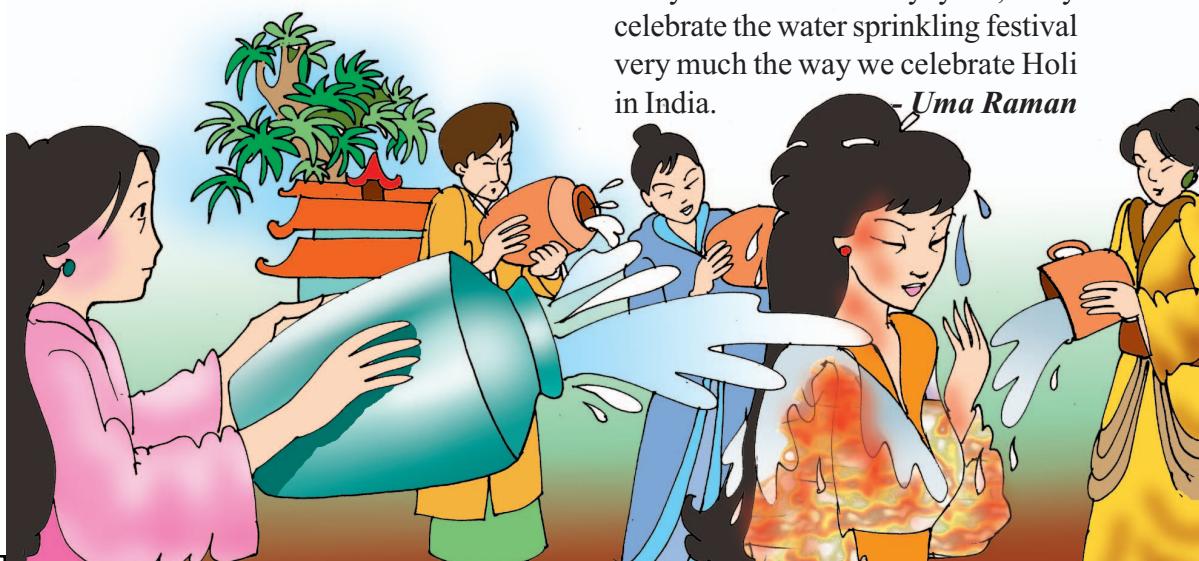
Yu Xiang leapt into the fire and catching hold of the head she held it aloft. As Yu Xiang stood there with the blood from the head soaking her, the fire went out. The people came out of their houses shouting with joy. The cruel demon had been destroyed



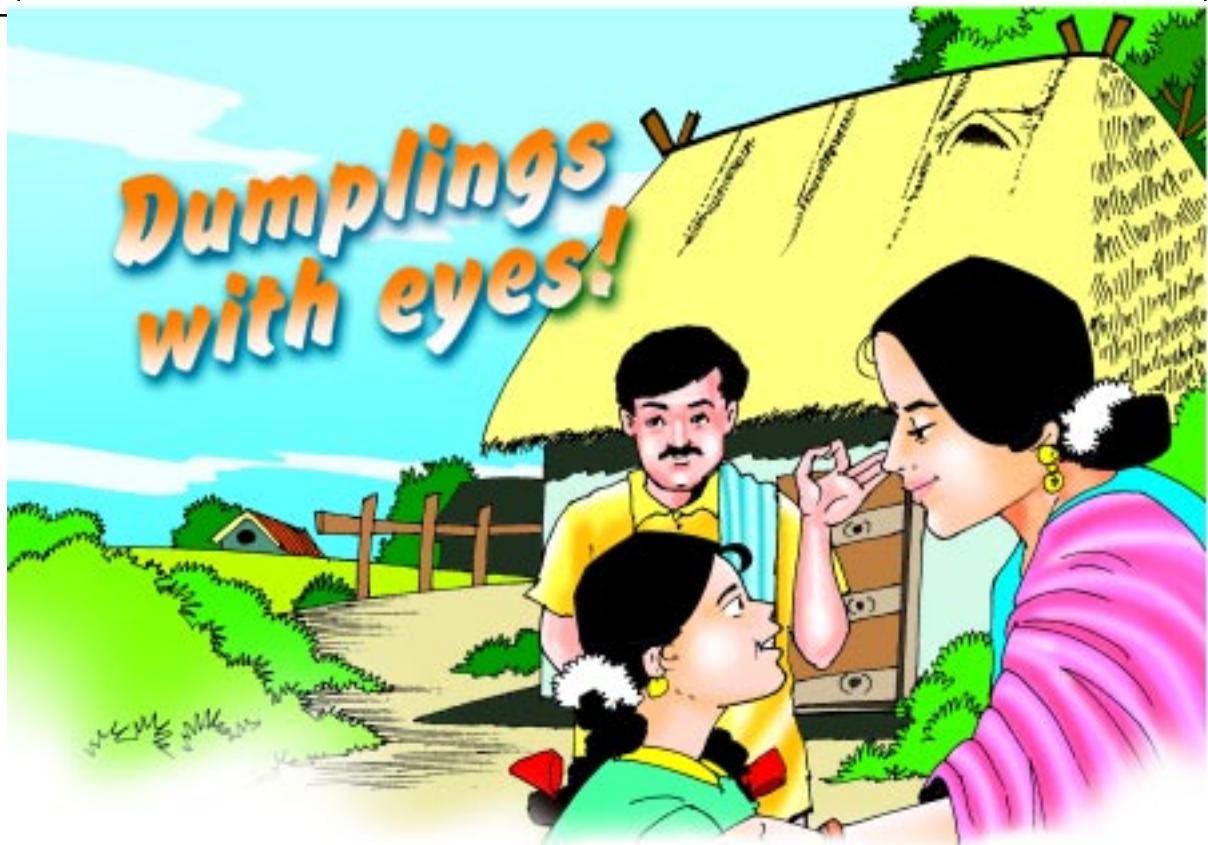
and would no longer trouble them. Yu Xiang smiled to see everyone so happy. The girls who had run out of the demon's cave now understood that they had been unfair to Yu Xiang. They came up to her to say that they were sorry. When they saw the blood splattered all over her, they brought water from the river and poured it over Yu Xiang to clean her and get rid of the monster's blood. Yu Xiang's parents and the villagers, too, came to pour water over her.

Pouring water over people has since become a tradition in China. They do it to get rid of evil and keep away disasters. Every year, they celebrate the water sprinkling festival very much the way we celebrate Holi in India.

—Uma Raman



Dumplings with eyes!



Pushpa, her mother, and her father lived in a small hut in a small village. One Sunday they decided to go to the fair in the next town.

Her mother said: "I'll make some dumplings, and leave them in a pot on the fireplace. When we get back tired and hungry, we'll have something warm to eat."

Her father was very happy. "That'll be nice," he said. "I love dumplings, and you haven't made them in years!"

"What are dumplings?" asked Pushpa. She had not eaten them before.

"You'll see when we eat them tonight," said the mother. "It's a

tasty dish." So, the mother made the small, white dumplings. She cooked the dough and then shaped it into small shell-like cups. She filled the cups with a fragrant mixture of spices and lentils. When all the little dumplings



were ready, she steamed them in a pot till they were cooked. She took off the lid to test if they were done. They were done just right. All this took her a little while.

While the mother made the dumplings, the father fed their cow and watered the plants. This took him some time.

Pushpa dressed herself in her best clothes and pretty bangles and was soon ready to go. "Come on, come on! We're late. Let's go. Do let's go," she said.

"We're coming, we're coming," they told her.

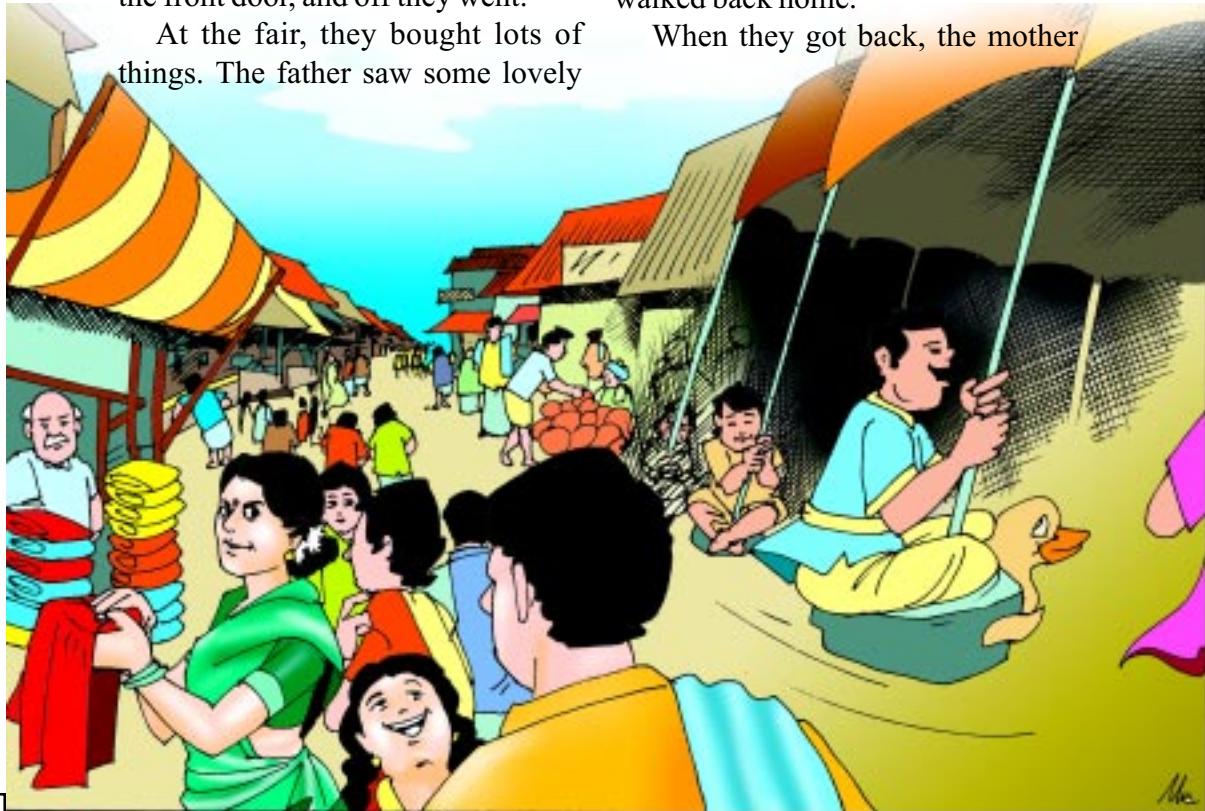
The mother closed the kitchen door and picked up a bag; the father locked the front door, and off they went.

At the fair, they bought lots of things. The father saw some lovely



glass bangles. He thought the mother would like them, and so he bought them for her. The mother saw a soft towel. She felt the father needed a new towel, and so she bought it for him. They also bought things they needed for the house. Next they bought a storybook for Pushpa. She loved to read. Soon they all felt tired and walked back home.

When they got back, the mother





told Pushpa, "Will you go and get the dumplings?"

Pushpa went into the kitchen to do just that. She was back in a minute without the dumplings. "Amma, Amma, do dumplings have eyes?" she asked.

"Eyes! Of course, not!" said the mother. "Pushpa, what'll you

think of next? You must have seen the mustard seeds I used. Don't waste any more time. Go, get the dumplings."

This time the girl was back even faster. "Amma, Amma," she asked, "do they have ears?"

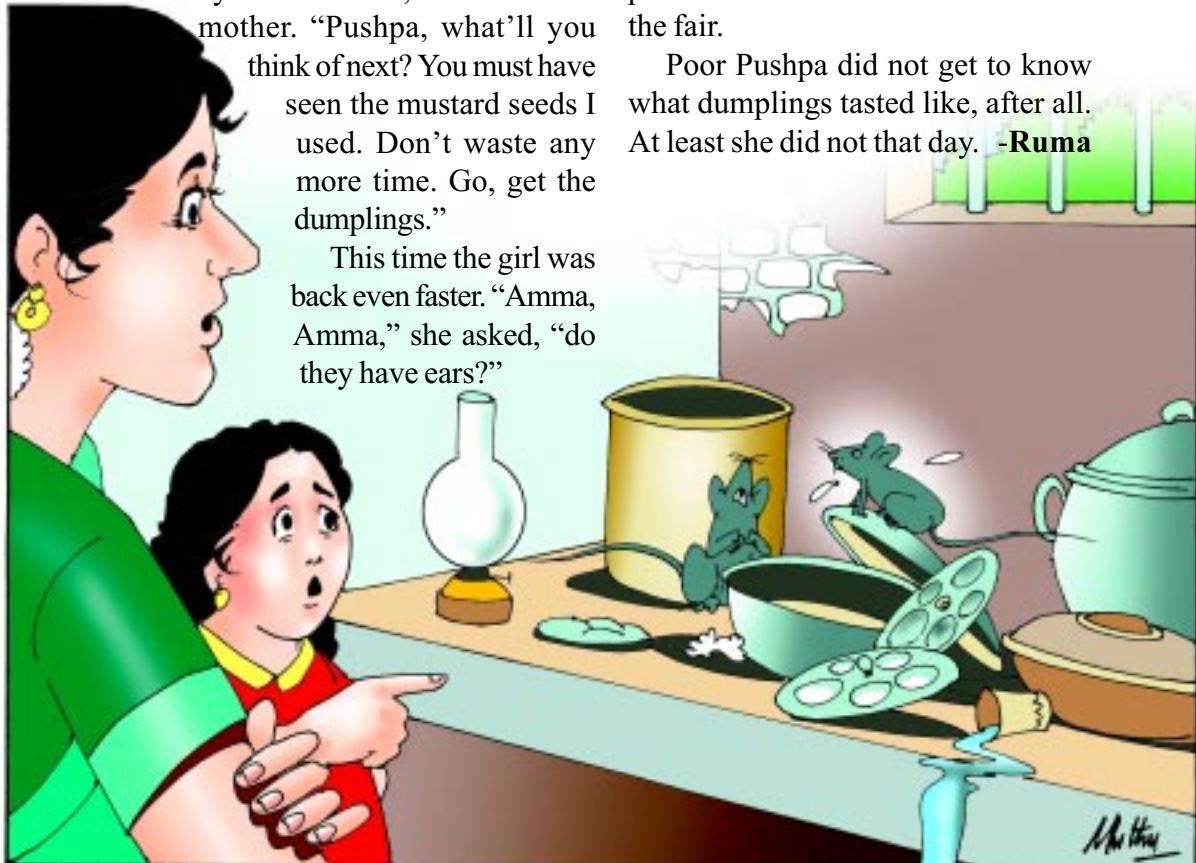
The father was amazed. "What! Dumplings have ears? Pushpa, whatever will you think of next?" he said.

The mother said, "Just bring them this minute. I'm too tired to play games." She sounded impatient.

So Pushpa went back. And she was back instantly. "Amma, Amma," she said, "these dumplings have a nose, mouth, and long whiskers as well."

"What!" exclaimed the mother and she ran into the kitchen. And what did she see there? All the dumplings were gone, and sitting in the pot were two fat, little mice. She had forgotten to put the lid back on before she left for the fair.

Poor Pushpa did not get to know what dumplings tasted like, after all. At least she did not that day. **-Ruma**



The Cooking Pot

Naseeruddin Hodja lived in Turkey sometime in the 13th century. He was born in village Hortu of Sivrihisar and died, it is said, in 1284 in Asehir where his tomb is. His father was the imam (religious head) of the village. Nasir-ud-Din meaning 'Victory of the Faith' was the name given to him by his parents. The title Hodja, which means 'Teacher' or 'Master', was something he got later in life.

The Hodja was a witty man with a great sense of humour. He is said to have been very brilliant, but often pretended to be foolish to make his point! And it was often to prick the balloon of pride or pomposity or greed in men. Many of his stories are about how he dealt with men who were greedy or foolishly proud.

Like those of Birbal or Tenali Raman in India, many stories are told about the Hodja's wit and humour. Of course, all of them might not have actually happened. But they are stories that have been told and retold over the years, because they are great fun and appealing to people of all ages. One of the famous Hodja stories is about the cooking pot.

Once it happened that the Hodja wanted to give a feast. He invited

many of his friends and then found he did not have a cooking pot large enough to make the *pilav*. His wife told him that their neighbour had a huge pot. "Why don't you ask our





neighbour to loan us the pot?" she suggested.

So the Hodja went to borrow the pot. The neighbour was at first a little hesitant, but then he gave the pot to him. When the feast was over, the Hodja placed a smaller pot into the

original one and gave both of them to the neighbour.

"Why is there a smaller pot inside?" asked the neighbour.

"Oh!" said Naseeruddin Hodja casually. "Didn't you know your pot was pregnant? It gave birth while it was at our house."

The neighbour's disbelief was overcome by his delight and he took the small pot without demur.

About a month later, the Hodja wanted to borrow the pot once again from his neighbour. The neighbour gave him the pot with alacrity. This time, however, the Hodja did not return the pot for a long time. Finally, after many days when the neighbour needed the pot, he went to ask for it. The Hodja pulled a long face and said: "I didn't know how to break the news to you, but your pot died about a week ago."

"Died?" shouted the neighbour indignantly. "A cooking pot cannot die!"

"Well, why not?" asked Naseeruddin Hodja unanswerably. "You believed that it could give birth, didn't you? So, why can't you believe it can also die?"

(Retold by Ruma)

Great Indian Adventure

Dear friends,

Trisha and Tuhin are very lucky children. They are going on an exciting adventure around the country this summer holidays and they invite you to join them in their rollicking tour.

This issue of *Chandamama* will take you on a great Indian adventure around the country. You will visit some well-known and some not-so-well known places and you will read about some customs and traditions that you may find new and surprising. You will also find a host of activities to participate in and you will learn a craft or two. Hope you like the fare we are offering.

Do write and tell us how you liked it.

Best wishes,

Viswam
Viswam



“Yeeh!” yelled Trisha. “Yippee! India, here we come!” That was her brother Tuhin. They ran up excitedly to their father with their annual report cards. Both ranked first in their classes. “Good show, kids! You’ve kept your part of the pact. Now I shall keep mine!”



Daddy had promised to take them round the exciting places in India in their summer holidays if they did well in their exams.

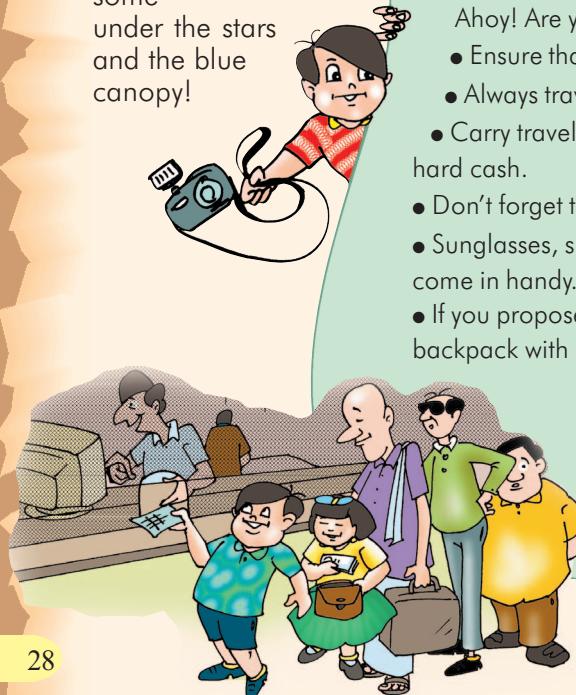
Well, they had done it! In the next few days, they pored over maps, drew up plans, booked tickets, and made reservations. They would travel by train, air, bus, car, and even



bullock carts. They planned to spend some days in hotels, some under the stars and the blue canopy!



TRAVEL TIPS

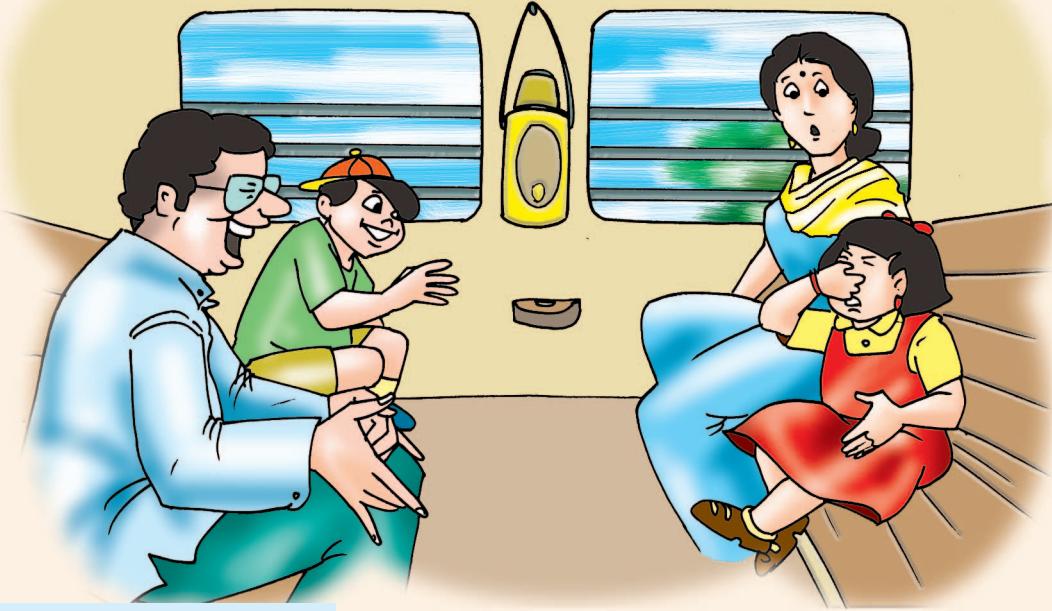


Ahoy! Are you all geared up for the trip?

- Ensure that you carry all documents of reservations.
- Always travel light. Take only apt and sensible clothes.
- Carry traveller’s cheques and credit cards rather than hard cash.
- Don’t forget to take medicines and a First Aid kit.
- Sunglasses, suntan lotion and insect repellent will come in handy.
- If you propose to do some trekking, take a backpack with a First Aid kit, a canteen of water, quick snacks, a set of clothes, torchlight, spare batteries, and a tent. Don’t forget your binoculars, camera, and film rolls.

Have a great journey!





Several Indian princes ran their own railways in their states. The rulers had luxurious private coaches. The Gaekwad of Baroda had even a throne installed in a coach!

Off, at last! The two children and their parents boarded the train at Mumbai's Victoria Terminus. "Trains are fun!" chimed Tuhin. "How old and musty this compartment is," Trisha curled up her nose at the grimy coach. "Well, the Indian railway is old," daddy replied with a laugh. "The British introduced trains in our country."

"The first ever train that ran in India was between Bombay and Thana," he continued. "It was waved off from Bombay, on April 16, 1853. It was a public holiday, and so a huge crowd had assembled to wave off the 400 passengers on the train. The royal send off included music from the Governor's Band and a 21-gun salute!"

"Ooo..h" Trisha pointed at the huge Alsatian dog straining at its leash. "Well, your pet can travel with you, too!" explained mummy. "You can take your dog along with you if you travel First Class. But you have to reserve either a two-berth or a four-berth compartment exclusively for your use and pay for the excess luggage!"

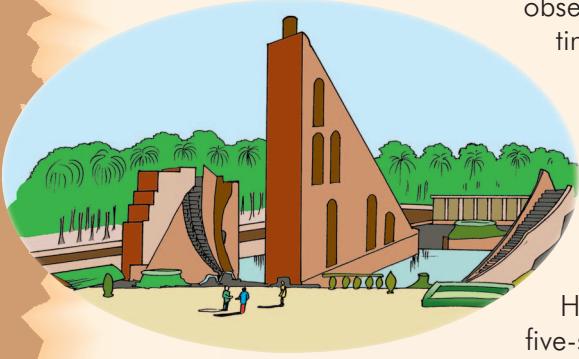


The first stop was colourful **Gujarat**. At **Ahmedabad**, the children visited the **Patang Museum**. For a kite buff like Tuhin, it was a revelation. More than a thousand colourful kites under one roof. Wow! He just gasped and gasped. This museum is one of the two kite museums in the world. The other one is in Tokyo. One of the kites on display here is made of



more than 450 pieces of paper.

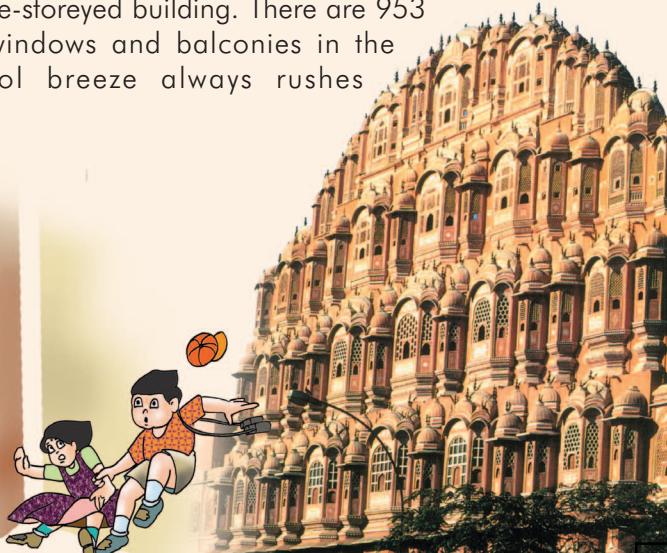
Rajasthan was quite an experience. The family stopped over at **Jantar Mantar**, an observatory built by Sawai Jai Singh II, the founder of the city of **Jaipur**. Jai Singh, a wise and learned ruler, was also an astronomer. He used the observatory and the devices here to measure local time and to determine eclipses.

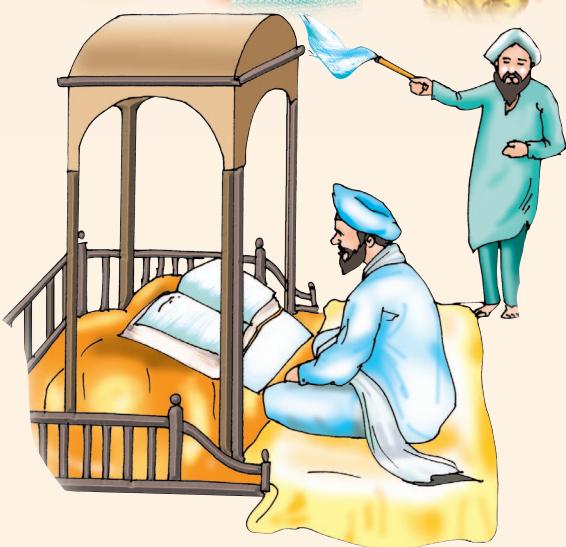


palace built such that a cool breeze always rushes throughout the palace.

"Clutch something or you'll be blown away!" joked mother, and the children, who did not realise that she was pulling their legs, desperately flung themselves against the walls of **Hawa Mahal**. She laughed aloud and the two were indignant. How windy it was in here!

Hawa Mahal, the palace of winds, is a five-storeyed building. There are 953 little windows and balconies in the





"You're entering a holy spot," mummy told Tuhin and Trisha, pulling the pallu of her sari over her head. "Don't giggle, misbehave or even talk loudly!" But there was actually no need for her warning. As they entered the **Golden Temple** in **Amritsar**, the children had fallen silent, impressed by the serene atmosphere.

"The Golden Temple is a perfect example of our secularism," explained daddy, almost in a whisper. "The land for the temple was donated by Emperor Akbar. Guru Ramdas started the excavation work in 1577. In 1589, the foundation for the temple was laid by Mian Mir, a Muslim saint!"

The children entered the Harmandir Sahib, the inner sanctum, where the holy book of the Sikhs, *Granth Sahib*, is placed under a brilliant canopy. A group of devotees were singing soulful *kirtans* or devotional songs.

When daddy decided to perform *kar seva*, or voluntary service, they joined in enthusiastically. They took brooms and along with several other volunteers swept the floors of the temple ; daddy stacked the footwear of the devotees in orderly rows, and mummy pitched in at the great community kitchen.

At the end of the seva, the whole family sat down to eat at the *langar* or the daily community feast at the temple. They relished the simple but delicious lunch of *rotis* and *sabji* and *dal*.





This was what the children were really looking forward to. The trip around various wildlife sanctuaries and national parks in the northern parts of the country. "No zoos," Trisha had insisted. "We want to go right into forests and see animals there." Can you trace the route they took through five major wildlife parks?

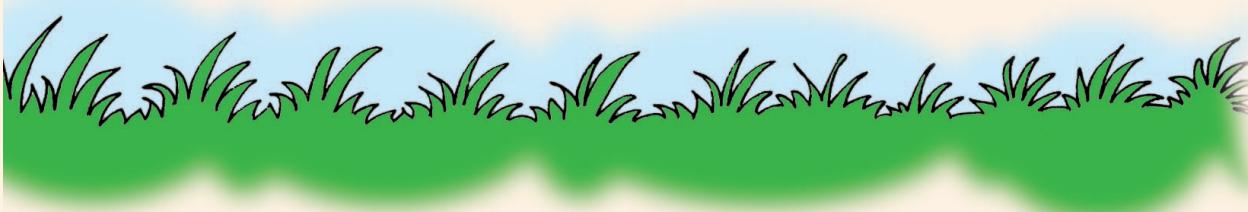




You can visit the **Great Himalayan National Park** near the Kulu valley between April and June. The snow leopard, mountain goat, yak, cranes, brown and black bears are the attraction here.



The **Corbett National Park** in the foothills of the Siwalik range, is named after the famous British hunter and naturalist, Jim Corbett. The right season to visit the park is from February to May. You can see the tiger, elephant, panther, sloth bear, nilgai, sambhar, chital, wildboar, porcupine ,and the four-horned antelope here.



The **Dudwa National Park**, at the foothills of the Himalayas, was originally meant to protect the swamp deer. Later, the tiger and leopard were introduced. The rhino was a recent addition. The park also has a wide range of birds.



You'll find tiger, panther, gaur, chital, sambhar, nilgai and birds at the **Bandhavgarh National Park**. The best time to pay a visit is between February and June.



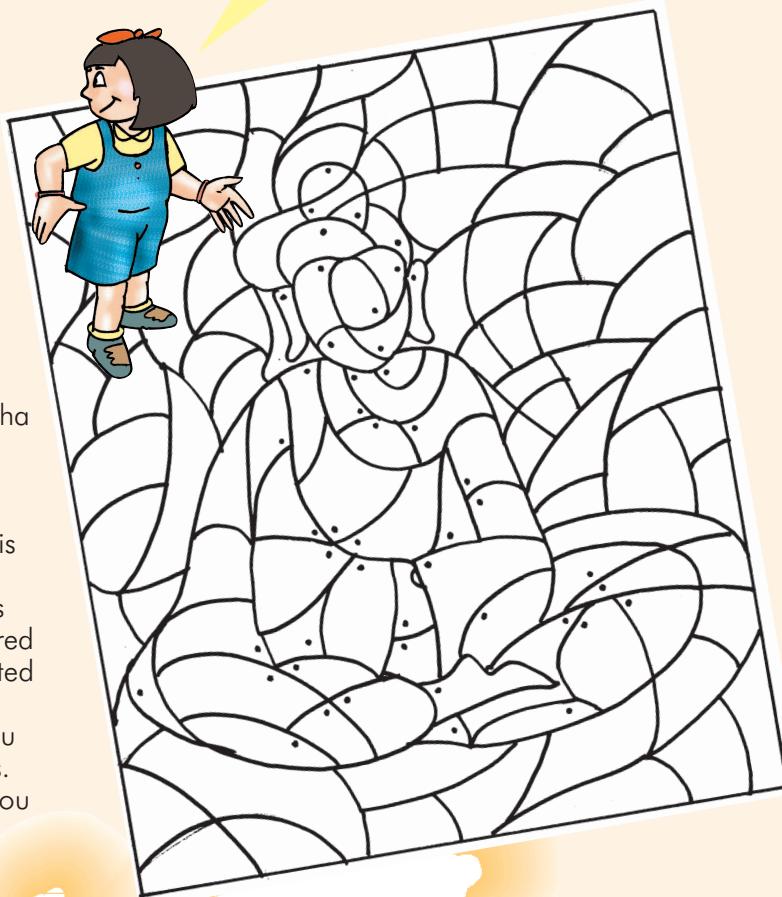
The **Palamu National Park** was included in the Project Tiger in 1973. You can watch the animals and birds from the towers at Hathibajwa and Madhuchan. The best season to be here is from October to May.

Colour on the dotted bits and you'll know where we are!



Tuhin jumped down from the bus and stretched himself. Trisha was already looking around curiously. Where are they?

Here's a clue : This is a very holy spot in **Bihar**. Tuhin drew this picture of a very revered figure who is associated with the place. If you colour on the dots you will soon see who it is. And that should tell you where they went.



From the ancient to the modern. They drove through the steel cities of India. The names of the cities are all jumbled. Can you unscramble them ?



34

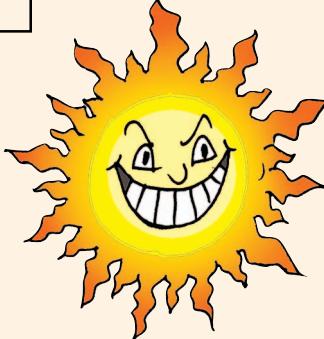
1. AKOBOR
2. SURPAMJHED
3. RUGRDUPA
4. LIBHIA
5. LEKOURAR

1. BOKARO
2. JAMSHEDPUR
3. DURGAPUR
4. BHILAI
5. ROURKELA

Steel cities jumble :

Colour the picture : Bodh Gaya, where Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment.

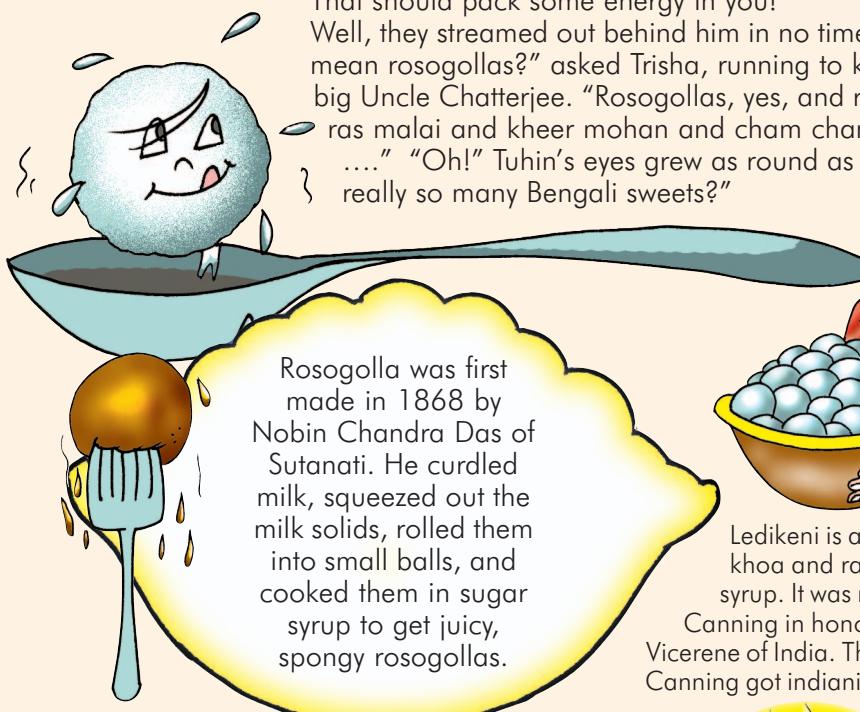
Answers : Colour the picture :



It was their first day in Kolkata, but the sweltering heat of summer nearly got them. Trisha and Tuhin panted with thirst and fatigue. Uncle Chatterjee, their father's friend, said, "Come, I'll take you where you can have some traditional sweets!"

That should pack some energy in you!"

Well, they streamed out behind him in no time at all. "You mean rosogollas?" asked Trisha, running to keep pace with big Uncle Chatterjee. "Rosogollas, yes, and rajbhog and ras malai and kheer mohan and cham cham and mishti doi and" "Oh!" Tuhin's eyes grew as round as a rosogolla. "Are there really so many Bengali sweets?"



Rosogolla was first made in 1868 by Nobin Chandra Das of Sutanuti. He curdled milk, squeezed out the milk solids, rolled them into small balls, and cooked them in sugar syrup to get juicy, spongy rosogollas.



Ledikeni is a fried ball of milk khoa and rava soaked in sugar syrup. It was named Lady Canning in honour of the British Vicerene of India. The name Lady Canning got indianised to ledikeni.

To make mishti doi



Boil 1 litre milk till it reduces to half its quantity.



Stir a tablespoon of sugar in a pan over the fire till it melts into a pinkish-brown syrup



Pour the syrup into the milk, when it is still warm.



Add a small cup of freshly set curds.

Stir well, pour into small earthen pots and leave them in a warm spot.



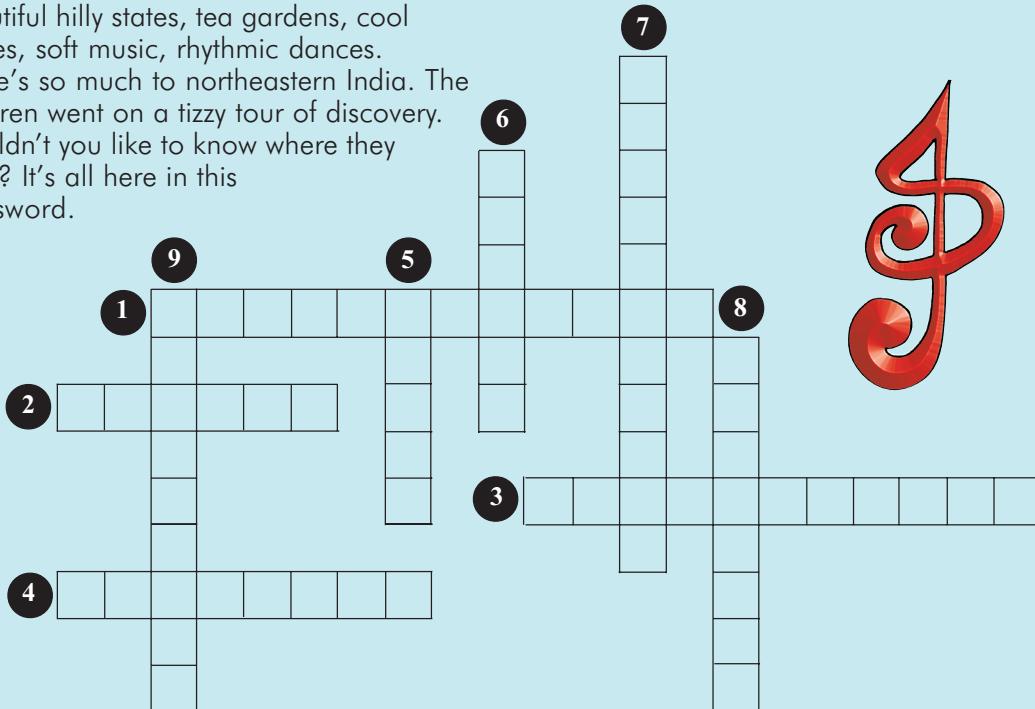
Mmm... great stuff!

And lo, in a few hours time, your yummy mishti doi is ready to eat.



Beautiful hilly states, tea gardens, cool climates, soft music, rhythmic dances.

There's so much to northeastern India. The children went on a fizzy tour of discovery. Wouldn't you like to know where they went? It's all here in this crossword.



Clues across :

1. Sanghai, the sprightly deer, can be spotted dancing here.
2. Here's where you tackle bamboo sticks as you dance to feet-tapping music.
3. Whew! What a large river island! It's the largest in the world.
4. Sniff! Sniff! That's tea brewing at Asia's biggest tea estate.

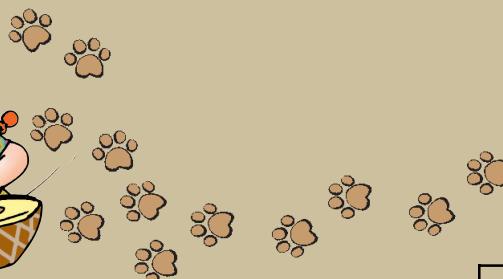
Clues down :

5. This is where the Brahmaputra enters the Indian mainland all the way from China.
6. You will never find a Buddhist monastery larger than the one here in Asia. And here is where the sixth Dalai Lama was born.
7. It rains, rains and rains cats and dogs here, beating all world records.
8. The cool breeze that blows across this resort in Meghalaya will take you by surprise.
9. The extraordinary one-horned rhinoceros roams here in solitude.



Across
1. Kebulamiao
2. Aizawl
3. Majuli
4. Monaloi
5. Lohit
6. Tawang
7. Cherrapunji
8. Shillong
9. Kaziranga
Down
1. Keibulamiao
2. Aizawl
3. Majuli
4. Monaloi
5. Lohit
6. Tawang
7. Cherrapunji
8. Shillong
9. Kaziranga

ACROSS
ANSWERS



Ta din dhin tha...



Did you know that both Tuhin and Trisha were students of classical Bharatanatyam dance? That's why dad was keen on showing them a few other popular dance styles. "I want to learn that too," declared Tuhin after watching a martial folk art form.

In **Manipur**, they watch the classical Manipuri, a graceful dance form of the Meiteis. The dancers portray *Krishnalila*, the pranks of the playful young Krishna. The dazzling costumes of mirrored skirts and gossamer veils enhance the charm of this dance.

At **Bhubaneswar**, they saw a scintillating performance of Odissi. According to archaeologists, Odissi is the earliest classical Indian dance style. Many caves in Orissa, such as the Rani Gumpha caves which date back to 200 B. C., have carvings that show Odissi dance sequences.

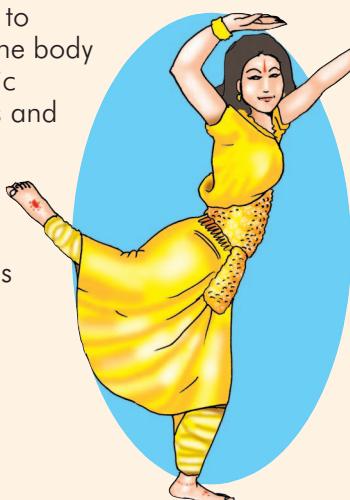


And then they saw two forms of the Chhau dance. Tuhin liked them the best.

The Chhau is a popular folk dance form of eastern India. Chhau dancers learn special exercises and massages to discipline the body for acrobatic leaps, jumps and somersaults.

They enact

scenes from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The Purulia Chhau of West Bengal is a vigorous dance. It is performed by six to seven male dancers who wear masks made of paper, cloth, and clay.



The Mayurbhanj Chhau of Bihar is traditionally performed during the Chaitra festival. It is a dance-drama form, which combines the martial arts and delicate dance steps.



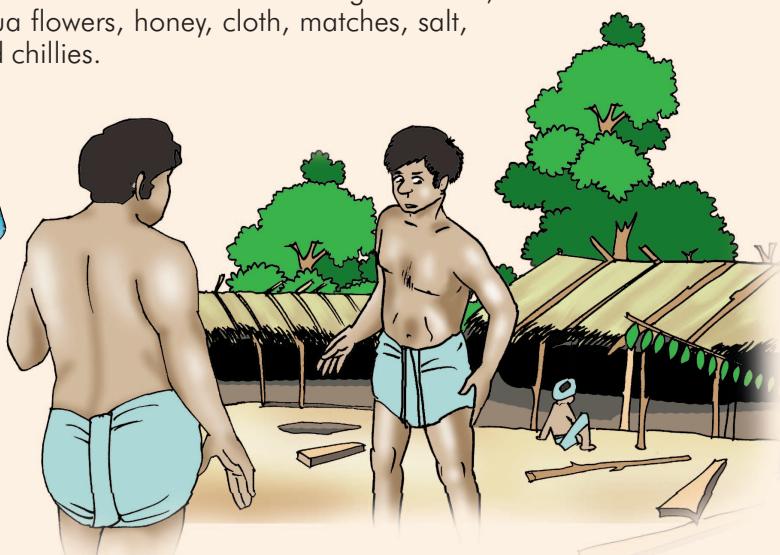


When they landed in the little town of Sambhalpur in Orissa, mummy went gaga over the gorgeous handloom saris that the place is so well known for. "Ooh!" she sighed and "Aah!" This went on till daddy and the kids got heartily bored and decided to leave mummy out of the next part of the tour. Mummy did not mind either!



It was a two-day project: a trip to the Gond heartland. From Sambhalpur to **Chattisgarh** is a short distance - a few hours by jeep. And they arrived at the tiny Gond settlement on the day of *haat* or the weekly market.

Hundreds of tribals and other villagers had crowded the market. All kinds of items were being sold here, such as mahua flowers, honey, cloth, matches, salt, and chillies.



Tuhin and Trisha went around the marketplace. "What are these strange flowers?" asked Trisha in wonder. "Those are mahua flowers," answered Uncle Pattanayak, who had escorted them here.

Mahua is important to the life of the Gonds. They brew toddy from the mahua flower and offer this to their deities at their harvest festival. Oil is extracted from the seeds of the mahua flowers and the fruits are eaten. The Gonds are one of the largest tribes of India. They live in the Chattisgarh area, now a full-fledged state, and the adjoining states of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa.

And after they attended the *haat* and tasted Gond food, which Tuhin liked, but Trisha did not, daddy said that it was time they returned to Sambhalpur.

My shopping's done!



When in **Andhra Pradesh** who can possibly miss **Tirupati**, the richest Hindu temple? The imposing and world famous temple of Lord Venkateswara at Tirupati is located on a hill, the Tirumalai, 840m above sea level.

"Mummy, why are so many people here bald?" asked Trisha, really amused at the sea of bald heads that met her eyes at this temple town. "For most Hindus of South India, tonsuring at Tirupati is part of a tradition. It is an offering that they make to God," explained mummy.

"And now I'm going to tonsure my head too," announced daddy grandly and the two children howled in protest.

Daddy brought them huge laddus. "Tirupati laddus are famous for their distinct taste and flavour!"

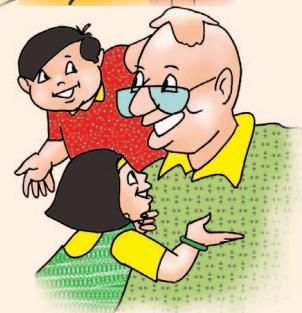
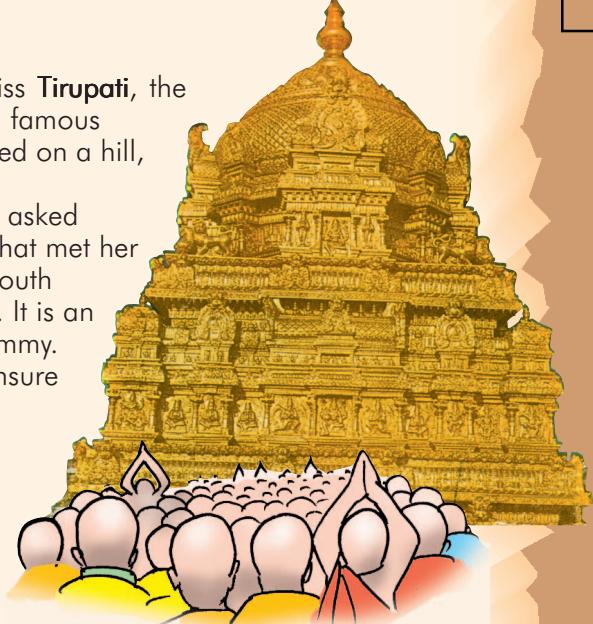
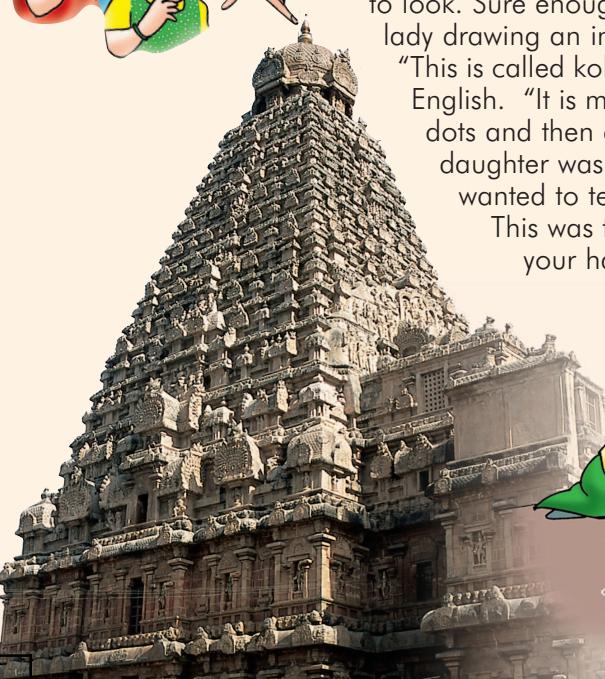
"Huuuu....ge is hardly the word for it!" commented Tuhin as the little group walked around the 66m high gopuram or tower of the **Brihadeeswara temple** at **Tanjavur**, in **Tamil Nadu**. It was the first temple to be built entirely of large granite blocks.

And then Trisha disappeared. Mummy was the first to notice that her little girl was missing. Soon daddy and Tuhin joined in the search for Trisha "Would she have run away from the temple?" asked mummy anxiously. They went out to look. Sure enough, there was naughty Trisha watching a lady drawing an intricate pattern on the ground.

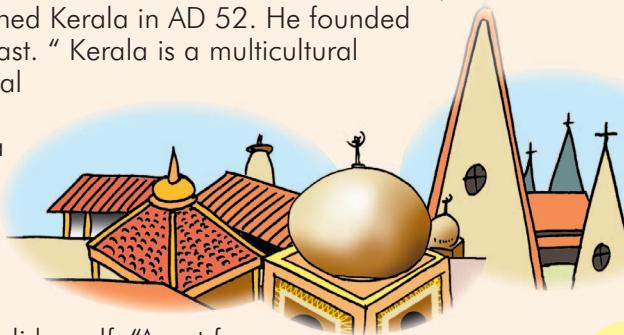
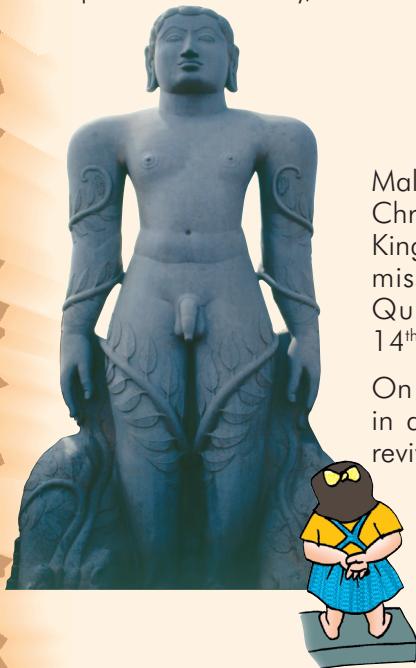
"This is called kolam, amma," explained the lady, in broken English. "It is made of rice flour. You first count and make dots and then draw over and around them. Your sweet daughter was tracing patterns on the temple pillar, so I wanted to teach her a kolam!"

This was the kolam the lady drew. Why don't you try your hand at it?

Shall I try it, aunty?



Tuhin and Trisha landed in **Cochin** in Kerala. Daddy took them to St. Francis Church, the oldest European-style church in India. They heard a guide narrating the story of the church to some tourists "The famous Portuguese explorer and sailor, Vasco da Gama lies buried here!" "Wow! Fancy that!" marvelled Tuhin. Christianity came here three centuries before it was recognised in Europe and became the established religion in Rome. It is said that St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Christ, reached Kerala in AD 52. He founded several churches along the coast. "Kerala is a multicultural society. All religions and cultural groups are represented here," pitched in mummy, who was a



Malayali herself. "Apart from Christians, there are Jews, who came in with the ships King Solomon. And some say, the Prophet himself sent missionaries who reached Kerala about AD 610. Quilon is said to have had five mosques in the 14th century."

Genuine Udupi - style!

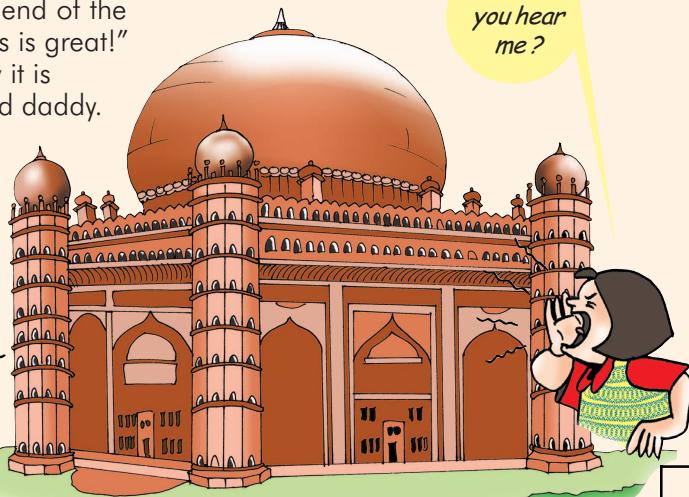
On to **Karnataka**. A breakfast of hot *idli-vadai* in an Udupi hotel in **Shravanabelagola** revived them after a tiring journey. Trisha was the first to see it: the 17m high statue of Lord Gomateshwara.



Shravanabelagola, a small town in Karnataka, is one of the oldest and holiest Jain pilgrim centres in India. The statue is visible even from a distance of 26 km. It is the world's tallest monolith.

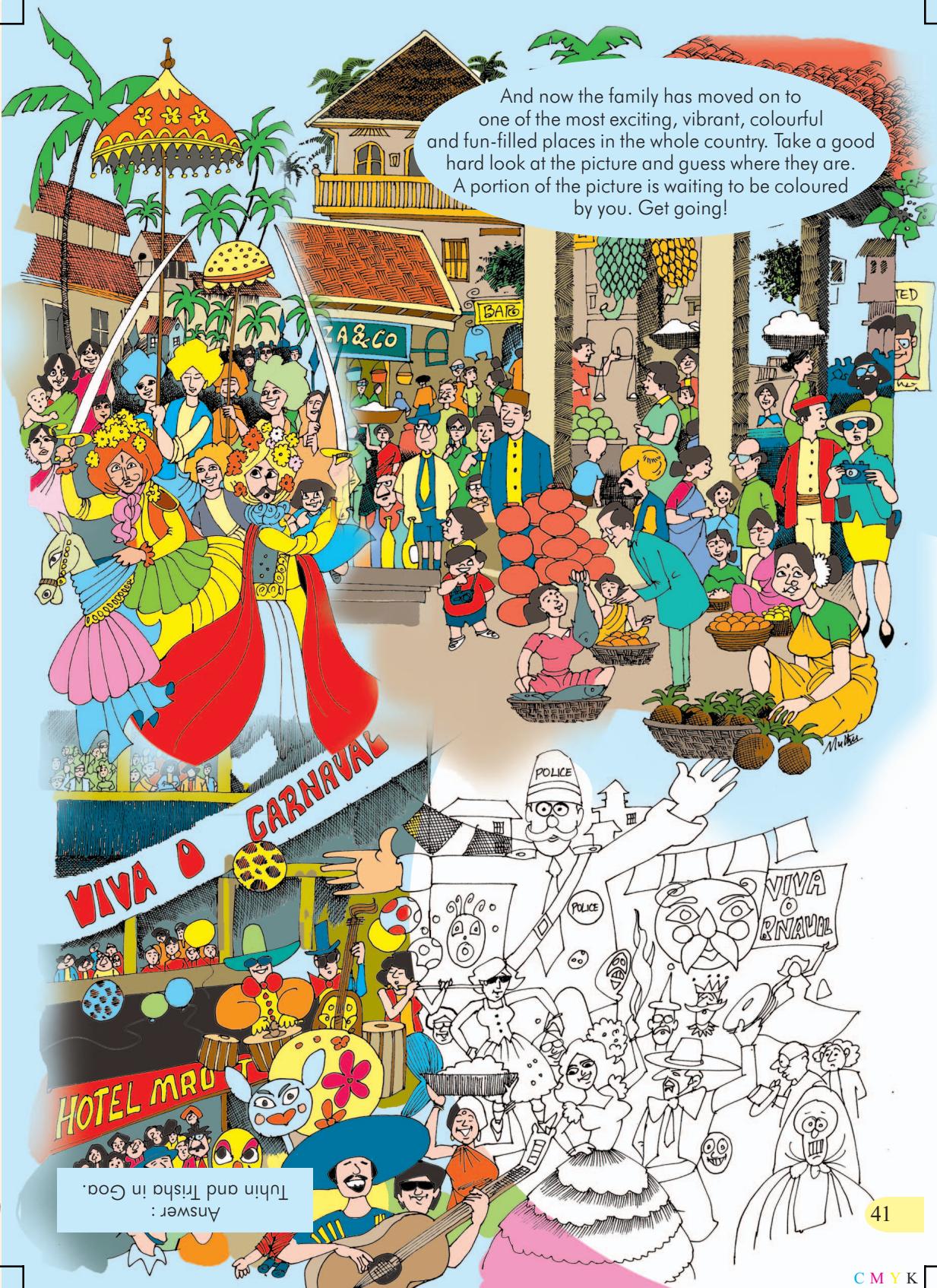
"Buzz...buzz," whispered Trisha, standing at one end of the Whispering Gallery at the **Gol Gumbaz** at **Bijapur**, Karnataka. And Tuhin at the other end of the gallery could hear her clearly! "This is great!" he declared, beaming. "That's why it is called the Whispering Gallery," said daddy.

Gol Gumbaz has one of the largest circular domes in the world, second only to St. Peter's dome in Rome. The dome measures 42 m in diameter and is unsupported by pillars.



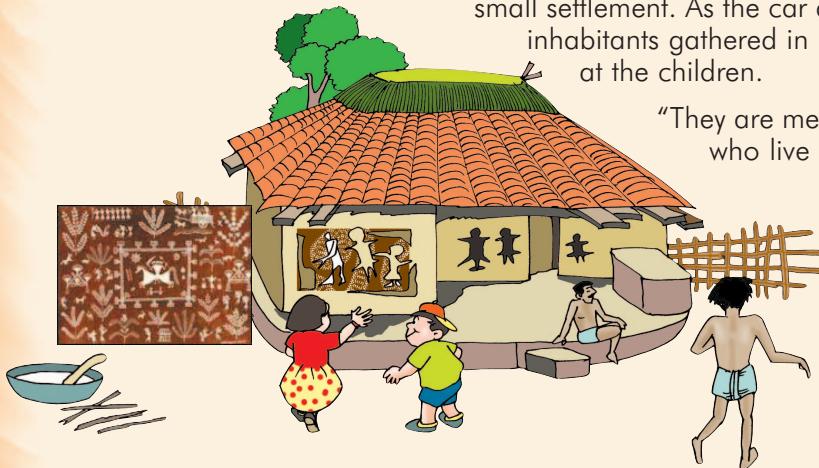
Pss..t, do you hear me?

And now the family has moved on to one of the most exciting, vibrant, colourful and fun-filled places in the whole country. Take a good hard look at the picture and guess where they are. A portion of the picture is waiting to be coloured by you. Get going!



Tuhin and Tishka in Goa.
Answer:

A month had flown by. They were nearly back home. But the adventure was not yet over. Daddy drove them in a car. "I want to show you something close to your home, something that you did not know had existed" he said and wouldn't say any more. Soon they were in the outskirts of **Thane** district of **Maharashtra**. They drove into a small settlement. As the car drove up, the local inhabitants gathered in large numbers to gape at the children.



"They are members of the Warli tribe who live in parts of Maharashtra and Gujarat," explained daddy and he spoke to some of them. A man and a woman soon led them into one of the huts. There were some paintings on the walls of the house. Daddy went up to the

painting on the wall of the house. "These are called Warli paintings and they are now famous throughout the world!" he said.

Trisha and Tuhin looked with great interest.

Warli paintings show the tribal gods, animals, trees, and the tribal men and women going about their daily activities- hunting, working in the fields, dancing.

The Warlis make their own paint and pen. The only colour that is used for these paintings is white. They make white paint out of fine, sifted rice flour mixed with water. They use thin reed-like sticks, about three inches long, as a pen.

In the paintings, the figures are drawn as triangles, and with stick-like hands and legs.

How did you like that trip around India ?



I'm going to write a story about our wonderful holiday



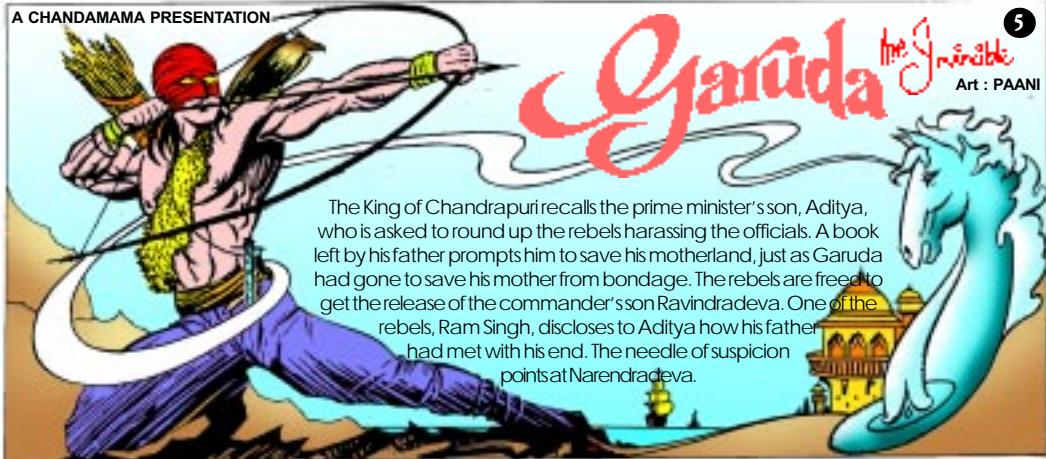
And I'm going to do a Warli painting

Won't you do one too?

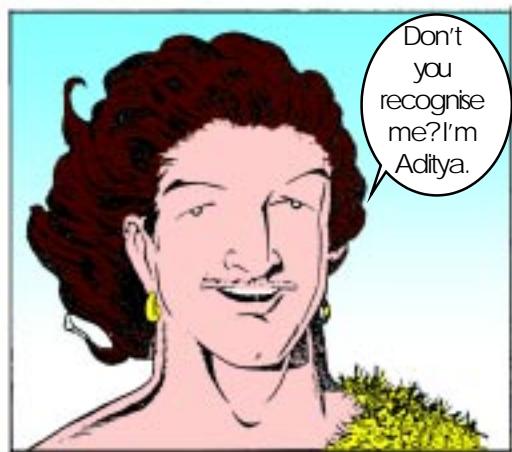
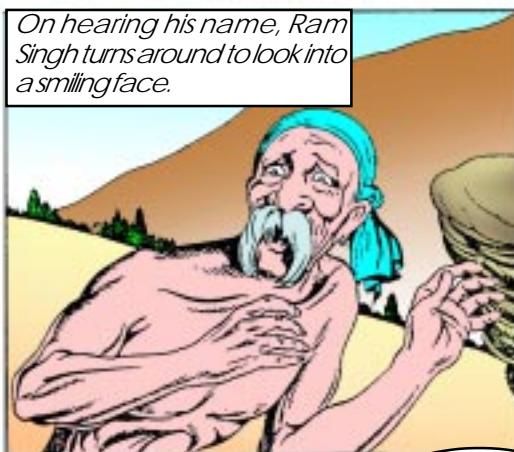
Garuda the Invincible

Art : PAANI

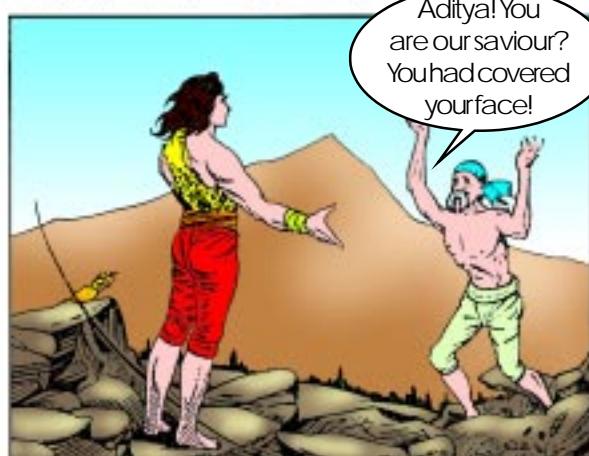
The King of Chandrapuri recalls the prime minister's son, Aditya, who is asked to round up the rebels harassing the officials. A book left by his father prompts him to save his motherland, just as Garuda had gone to save his mother from bondage. The rebels are freed to get the release of the commander's son Ravindradeva. One of the rebels, Ram Singh, discloses to Aditya how his father had met with his end. The needle of suspicion points at Narendradeva.



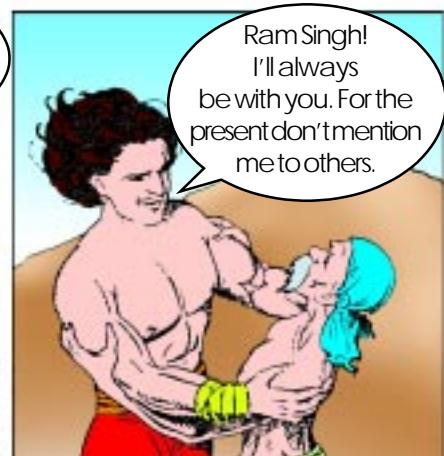
On hearing his name, Ram Singh turns around to look into a smiling face.



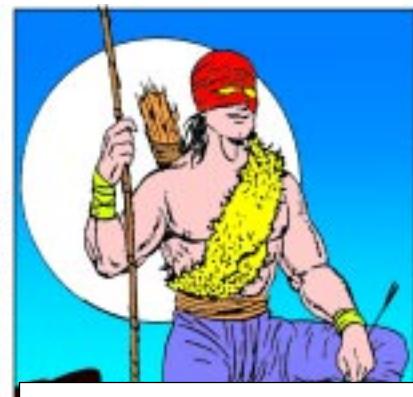
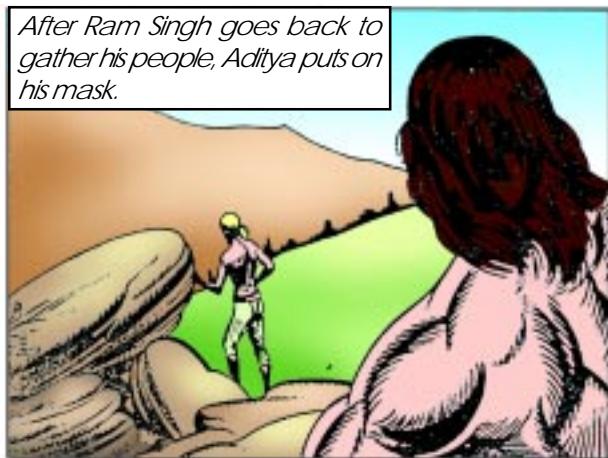
Aditya! You are our saviour? You had covered your face!



Ram Singh! I'll always be with you. For the present don't mention me to others.

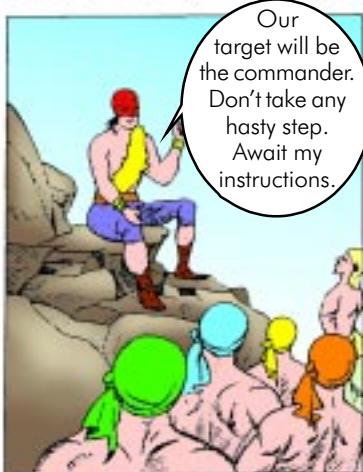


After Ram Singh goes back to gather his people, Aditya puts on his mask.

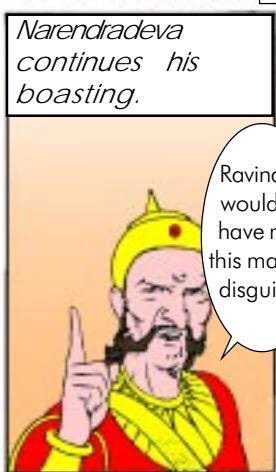


Aditya awaits the return of Ram Singh and his followers.

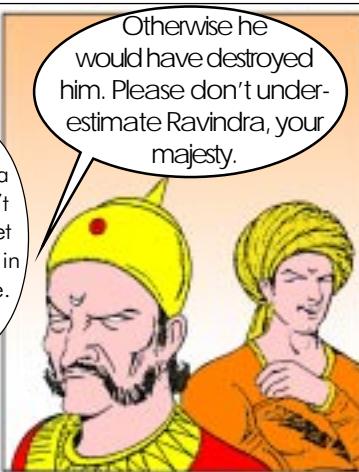
Our target will be the commander. Don't take any hasty step. Await my instructions.



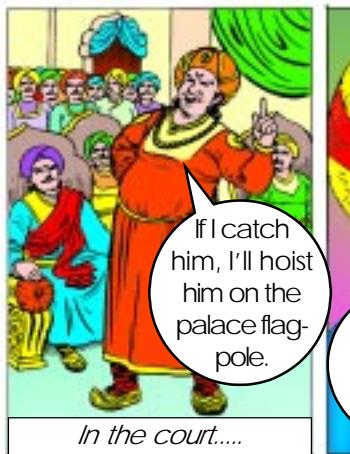
Narendradeva continues his boasting.



Otherwise he would have destroyed him. Please don't underestimate Ravindra, your majesty.



If I catch him, I'll hoist him on the palace flagpole.

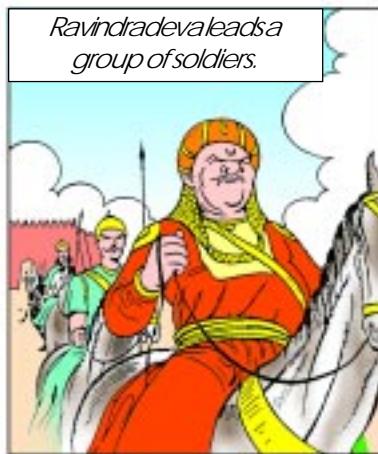


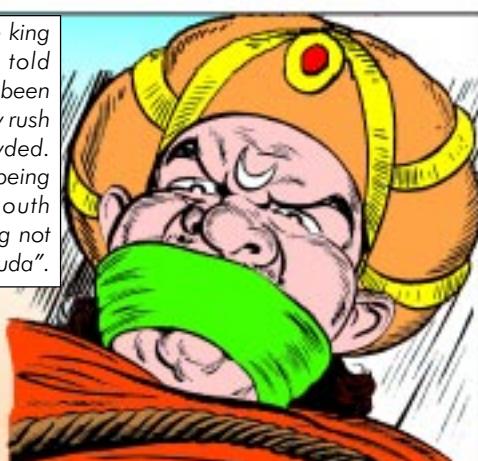
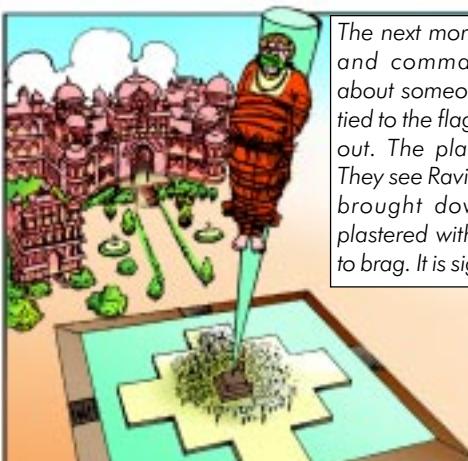
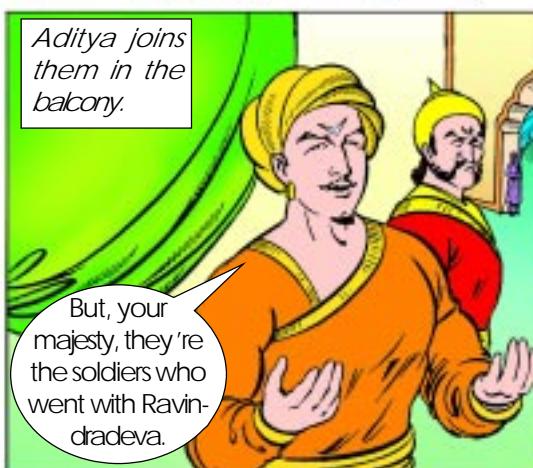
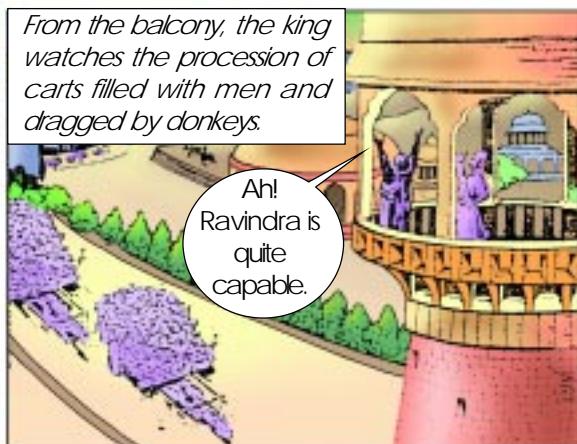
In the court....

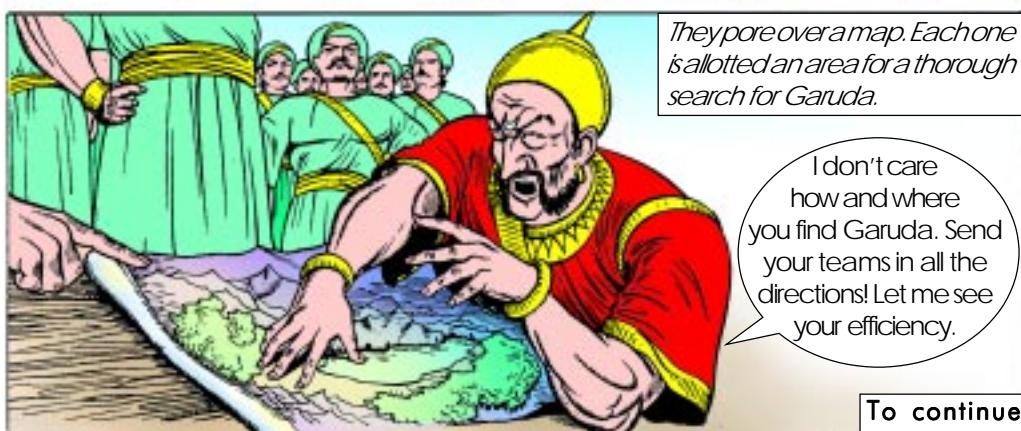
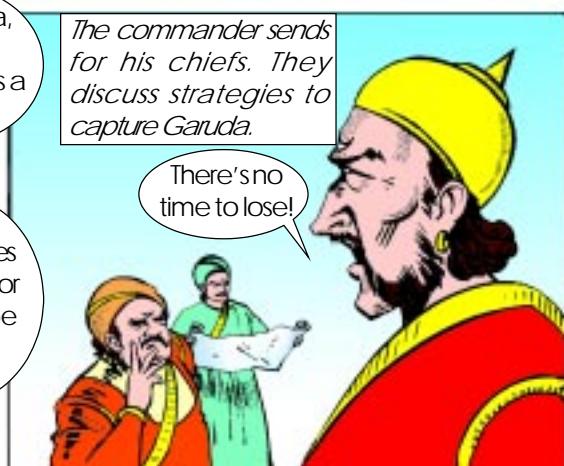
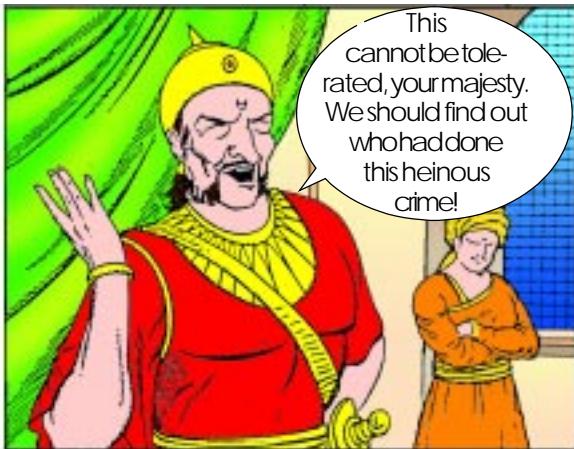
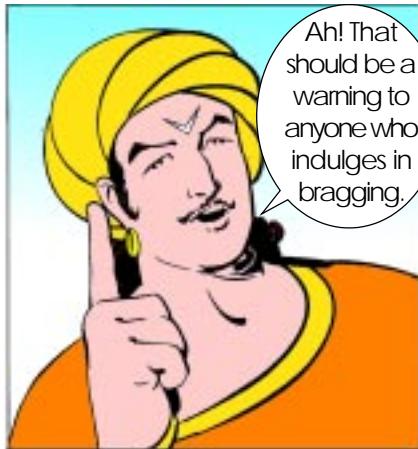
That is the right spirit. You may go ahead and capture him.



Ravindradeva leads a group of soldiers.









USE YOUR
VACATION TO
WIN A PRIZE

An invitation to children to contribute to the

CHILDREN'S SPECIAL

(November 2001 issue)

For young writers :- Original stories between 300 and 500 words, with a catchy title, and/or puzzles, riddles, jokes. Entries may be in English, Hindi, Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil or Malayalam. You may send up to three entries. If you have a friend to make drawings/paintings for your entry, send them, too. If they are good, your friend will be invited to Chennai (travel expenses paid) to do the final drawing.

For young artists :- Up to three drawings/paintings based on a well-known incident in Indian mythology/history (to be explained in writing). Those sending entries which come up to our expectations will be invited to Chennai (travel expenses paid) to illustrate the stories/items chosen for the Special Number.

Closing date : June 7, 2001

Prizes : Attractive prizes will be given to meritorious efforts.

Photo : Please attach a passport size photo along with your entry.

Name : Age/Date of Birth :

Class : School :

Home address :

..... Pin Code :

Description of entries :-

1.
2.
3.

I hereby certify that the entries mentioned above are the original, unaided work of my son/daughter. I hereby agree to *Chandamama* holding full copyright on the selected entry and using it in the print and electronic media and in any language.

Signature of Participant

Signature of Parent

[Please fill the form on the reverse and return]

BORN THIS MONTH

Who does not love films? But, while most of us quench our thirst for films by watching them, Satyajit Ray expressed his love by making them. Ray was acknowledged worldwide as a brilliant filmmaker, and he was largely responsible for putting India on the world movie map. He was honoured with several awards. The crowning glory of his career came when he was awarded the Oscar for Lifetime Achievement in 1992.

Satyajit Ray was born on May 2, 1921, in Calcutta. Art and films fascinated Ray even as a child. In fact, a love for the arts and media ran in his family. His grandfather, Upendra Kishore, was a writer and printer-publisher; father Sukumar Ray was also a well known writer and poet in Bengali.

God had been very kind to Satyajit Ray. He made him a brilliant man. A film director, artist, music composer and director, author, scriptwriter, costume designer, photographer, editor, poet and intellectual — he was a man of many parts and he excelled in everything he did. After graduating in economics, he studied fine arts and painting at Santiniketan in 1941.

In 1943, he began his career in an advertising agency. But his interest for making movies still lingered deep down in his heart. In 1950, his employers sent Ray to London. He saw nearly 100 European movies during his stay there for nearly five months. He was greatly influenced by the Italian film, *Bicycle Thief*, which propelled him to pursue filmmaking seriously.

His tryst with filmmaking began with *Pather Panchali*. This movie rocketed Ray to fame, as it won instant applause at the



Satyajit Ray

Cannes Film Festival in 1956. It was awarded the 'best human document' award. His other memorable movies were *Aparajito* (1956), *Apur Sansar* (1959), *Charulata* (1964), *Shatranj ke Khiladi* (1977) and *Agantuk* (1991). *Joi Baba Felunath* fetched him the National Award for the Best Children's Film. He made 30 movies including four children's films.

Fondly called Manikda by his friends and colleagues, Ray was well known for his deep understanding of human psychology and situation. He created two charming musical fantasies for children — *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* and *Hirak Rajar Deshe*.

He was a versatile cartoonist and writer. In 1961, he revived *Sandesh*, the children's magazine started by his grandfather, for which he contributed stories and drawings.

He was awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1992. He died in April that year. His name continues to evoke great awe and admiration among movie lovers.



SAGA OF VISHNU

12. Wedding and then exile

At the *swayamvara* of Sita, daughter of King Janaka of Mithila, many kings and princes had gathered to try and win the hand of the beautiful princess. Each one tried to show his strength by lifting the bow of Shiva, but not one was able even to raise it, let alone string it. King Janaka got quite worried. In disappointment he lamented: "If I had known that there were no heroes left on Earth, I would not have made such a condition for my daughter's wedding."

Lakshmana immediately protested with vehemance. He felt the king's words were an insult to Rama. Then Janaka invited Rama to string the bow and win Sita's hand. Rama bowed to Vishwamitra and sought his permission before approaching the bow. He placed a hand under the bow

and lifted it as easily as an elephant would pick up a sugarcane shoot. Sita's heart beat fast as she watched Rama lift the bow. Then he bent the bow and pulled the string down to hook it onto the other end. Suddenly, there was a sound like that of a mighty clap of thunder, and the bow fell to the ground with a tremendous clatter.

The sound echoed through the whole universe. Parasurama, who sat on top of mount Mahendra in far away South, was startled out of his meditation by the sound. He knew that Shiva's bow had been broken. Though he knew his own time on Earth was nearing the end and Vishnu had been born as Rama, he was overcome by a terrible anger at the breaking of the bow and he set

off towards the direction from where the sound had come.

As soon as the bow broke, Sita coyly placed the garland of flowers she was holding around Rama's neck. King Janaka was wreathed in smiles as he saw Rama break the bow which his family had worshipped for generations. He at once despatched messengers with gifts to invite King Dasaratha to the wedding.

Dasaratha, beside himself with delight, came with his queens and two sons to Mithila. The wedding of Sita and Rama was a great occasion for the people of Mithila and they celebrated it joyfully. Rama's three brothers, too, were married at the same time. Lakshmana married Urmila, Bharata was married to Mandavi, and Shatrughna married Shatrupa.

After the wedding, King Dasaratha set off for Ayodhya with the four couples. On their way, they met an angry Parasurama vowing to get even with the person who had broken the mighty bow of Shiva. Dasaratha was alarmed by Parasurama's conduct. He was afraid Parasurama might harm Rama and tried to pacify him.

Parasurama, however, looked at

Rama and thundered: "By breaking Siva's bow, you have insulted my guru, but I now challenge you to string *my* bow."

He then handed his bow to Rama. Rama took the bow and strung it with great ease. Parasurama realised that

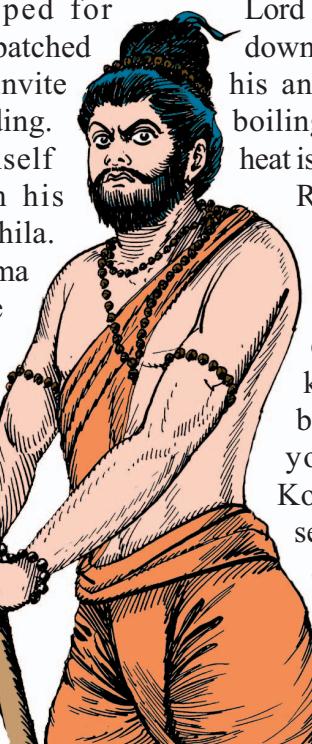
Lord Vishnu had indeed come down to Earth as Rama and his anger subsided the way boiling milk does when the heat is turned off. He besought

Rama's pardon, handed over his bow to Rama, and said: "Rama, from today, I'll stop my enmity towards the kshatriyas. The Kodanda bow I've given you is yours and you are Kodandarama." He then set off for the mountains, and Rama and his family returned to Ayodhya in great happiness.

The city of Ayodhya welcomed the newly wedded

couples with great joy. The streets were decorated with flowers and lights, and there was non-stop dance and music as the procession wound its way to the palace. Rama and Sita settled down in the palace and spent happy days together.

After many days of happiness, Dasaratha began to feel uneasy. He



felt that he was constantly being confronted by bad omens. He was afraid that he might not live long. He recalled the curse on him by the old couple in the forest and feared that he might face the agony of being separated from his beloved Rama. Therefore, he decided to crown Rama as the King of Ayodhya and then retire to the forest with his wives. He asked the court sage Vasishtha to choose an auspicious time and make arrangements for Rama's coronation.

In the heavens above, Lord Brahma sat deep in joyful contemplation. His consort Saraswati sat beside him absorbed in playing the veena. Narada followed by the devas came to meet Lord Brahma. He said: "My Lord, if Rama sits on the throne of Ayodhya, who will fight the rakshasas and make Earth safe for all of us? The devas are troubled by this thought."

Brahma looked at Saraswati meaningfully. She smiled gently and said: "Whatever has to happen will happen. Narada, you are one who knows of all that happens in the three worlds. Look at Mandhara, who is as good as you are in stirring up things, going in to make trouble."

Narada and the Devas looked down on Ayodhya and saw Mandhara humming along on her way to Queen Kaikeyi's apartments.

Narada looked at Saraswati and



said: "O Goddess of Speech! I wonder what words you are going to put into Mandhara's mouth for the welfare of the world." He then went away and so did all the Devas.

Mandhara was a hunchback. She was one of Kaikeyi's companions and had accompanied her when Kaikeyi had got married to Dasaratha. She now went into Kaikeyi's room and looked at her with great pity and sympathy.

Kaikeyi asked: "Why, what's the matter, Mandhara? Why do you look so sad?"

"Oh, how can I tell you that, milady? I've just heard that Prince Rama is soon going to be crowned king. Crowned!" said Mandhara, with great stress on the word.

"Ah! But it's good news that you bring!" exclaimed Kaikeyi happily, and she placed a string of pearls that she was wearing around Mandhara's neck.

"Good news, did you say?"

sniffed Mandhara. "What an innocent creature you are!"

"What are you saying, Mandhara?" asked Kaikeyi in confusion.

"If Ramachandra becomes king, what'll happen to all of us? We'll become maids to Kausalya! You better think about this carefully. You'll no longer be a queen, you won't even be a queen mother! That will be Kausalya's prerogative," explained Mandhara.

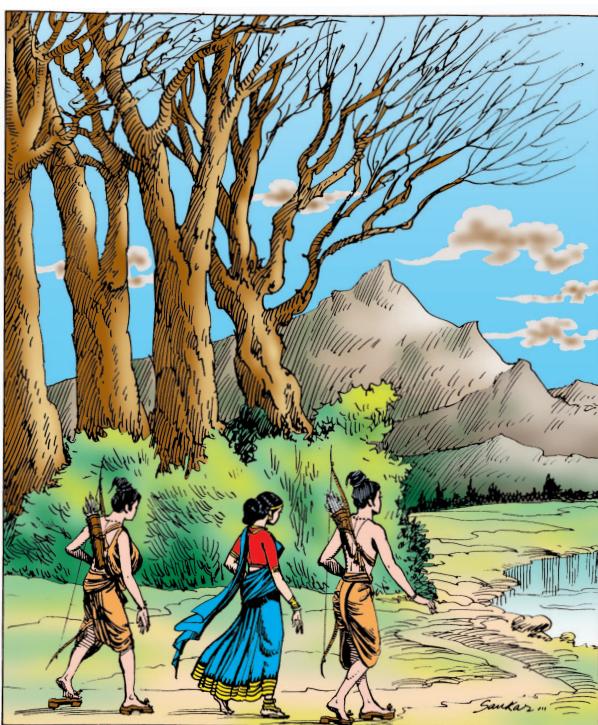
When she saw Kaikeyi grow thoughtful, she pressed her point further. "Now is not the time to hesitate. Go to the king and ask for your two boons now. Did you not give birth to Bharata? Don't you owe him something? Do you want to see him as an underling all his life?" Mandhara egged on Kaikeyi.

At the end of Mandhara's speech, Kaikeyi felt she had been truly wronged. She went to King Dasaratha and demanded her two boons. Dasaratha, completely unaware of the blow waiting for him, told Kaikeyi she could ask for whatever she wanted.

Kaikeyi then pronounced the words which turned Dasaratha's world upside down. "I want Ramachandra to be exiled to the forest for fourteen years. That's my first wish. For my second boon, I want Bharata to be crowned king instead of Rama!"

Dasaratha could not believe his ears. When he found that Kaikeyi was serious about her demands, his grief was so intense that he fell back on his bed in a dead faint.

Rama, however, was undisturbed by the turn of events. 'It's my duty to obey my father's wishes. Father should never be known as a dishonourable person who did not keep his word,' he thought. He soon changed into plain garments made of bark that simple forest-dwellers wore. Sita prevailed upon him to allow her to accompany him and they found that brother Lakshmana, too, had got into simple clothes, ready to leave for the forest. **(To continue)**



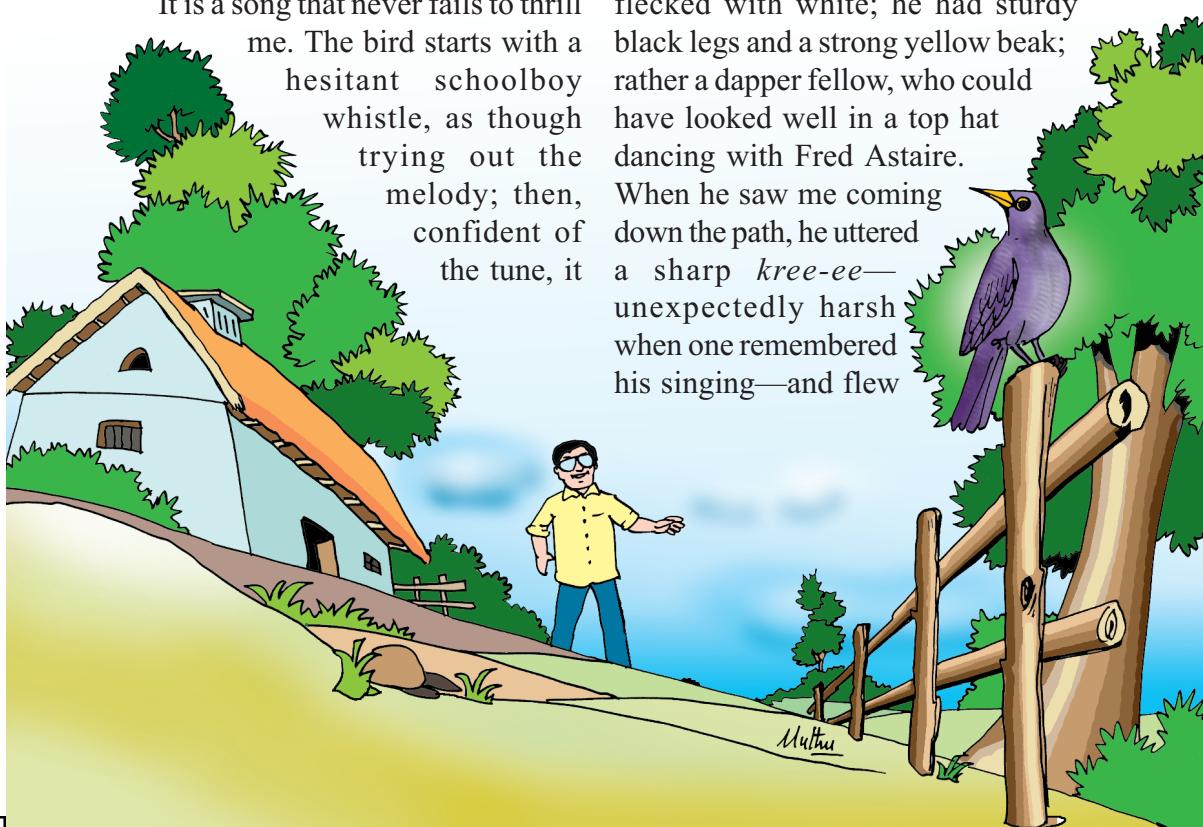
The song of the whistling thrush

I had only been in the hills for a few days when I heard the song of the Himalayan whistling thrush. I did not see the bird that day. It kept to the deep shadows of the ravine below the old stone cottage. I was sitting at the window, gazing out at the new leaves on the walnut and wild pear trees. All was still; the wind was at peace with itself; the mountains brooded massively under a darkening sky. Then, emerging from the depths of the forest like a dark, sweet secret, came the indescribably beautiful call of the whistling thrush.

It is a song that never fails to thrill me. The bird starts with a hesitant schoolboy whistle, as though trying out the melody; then, confident of the tune, it

bursts into full song, a crescendo of sweet notes and variations that ring clearly across the mountainside. Then suddenly the song breaks off, right in the middle of a cadenza, and the enchanted listener is left wondering what happened to make the bird stop so suddenly. Nothing, really, because a few moments later the song is taken up again.

At first the bird was heard but never seen. Then one day I found the whistling thrush perched on the broken garden fence. He was a deep, glistening purple, his shoulders flecked with white; he had sturdy black legs and a strong yellow beak; rather a dapper fellow, who could have looked well in a top hat dancing with Fred Astaire. When he saw me coming down the path, he uttered a sharp *kree-ee*—unexpectedly harsh when one remembered his singing—and flew



away into the shadowed ravine.

But as the months passed, he grew used to my presence and became less shy. One of my rainwater pipes had blocked, resulting in an overflow and a small permanent puddle under the stone steps. This became the whistling thrush's favourite bathing place. On sultry summer afternoons, while I was taking a siesta upstairs, I would hear the bird flapping about in the rainwater pool. A little later, refreshed and sunning himself on the tin roof, he would treat me to a little concert, performed, I cannot help feeling, especially for my benefit.

It was Prakash, the man who brought my milk, who told me the story of the whistling thrush, or the Kastura or Kaljit, as the hillmen call the bird. According to legend, the god Krishna fell asleep near a mountain stream and, while he slept, a small boy made off with his famous flute. On waking up and finding his flute gone, Krishna was so angry that he changed the culprit into a bird; but the boy had played on the flute and learned some of Krishna's wonderful music, and even as a bird he continued, in his disrespectful fashion, to whistle the music of the gods, only stopping now and then (as the whistling thrush does)

when he could not remember the right tune.

It was not long before my thrush was joined by a female, who was exactly like him (in fact, I have never been able to tell one from the other). The pair did not sing duets, like Nelson Eddy and Jeannette MacDonald, but preferred to give solo performances, waiting for each other to finish before bursting into a song. When, as sometimes happened, they started off together, the effect was not so pleasing to my human ear.

These were love calls, no doubt, and it was not long before the pair was making forays into the rocky ledges of the ravine, looking for a suitable nesting site; but a couple of years were to pass before I saw any of their young.

After almost two years in the hills, I came to realise that these were birds "for all seasons". They were the liveliest in midsummer; but even in the depths of winter, with snow lying on the ground, they would suddenly start singing as they flitted from pine to oak to naked chestnut.

As I write, there is a strong wind rushing through the trees and bustling about in the chimney, while distant thunder threatens a summer storm.



Undismayed, the whistling thrushes are calling to each other as they roam the wind-threshed forest.

At other times, I have heard them clearly above the sound of rushing water. And sometimes they leave the vicinity of the cottage and fly down to the stream, half a mile away, sending me little messages on the wind. Down there, they are busy snapping up snails and insects, the chief items on their menu.

Whistling thrushes usually nest on rocky ledges near water, but my overtures of friendship might have given my visitors other ideas. Recently I was away from Mussoorie for about a fortnight. When I returned, I was about to open my window when I noticed a large bundle of ferns, lichen, grass, mud, and moss balanced outside on the window ledge. Peering through the glass, I was able to recognize this untidy basket as a nest. Could such tidy birds make such an untidy nest? Indeed they could, because they arrived and proved their ownership a few minutes later.

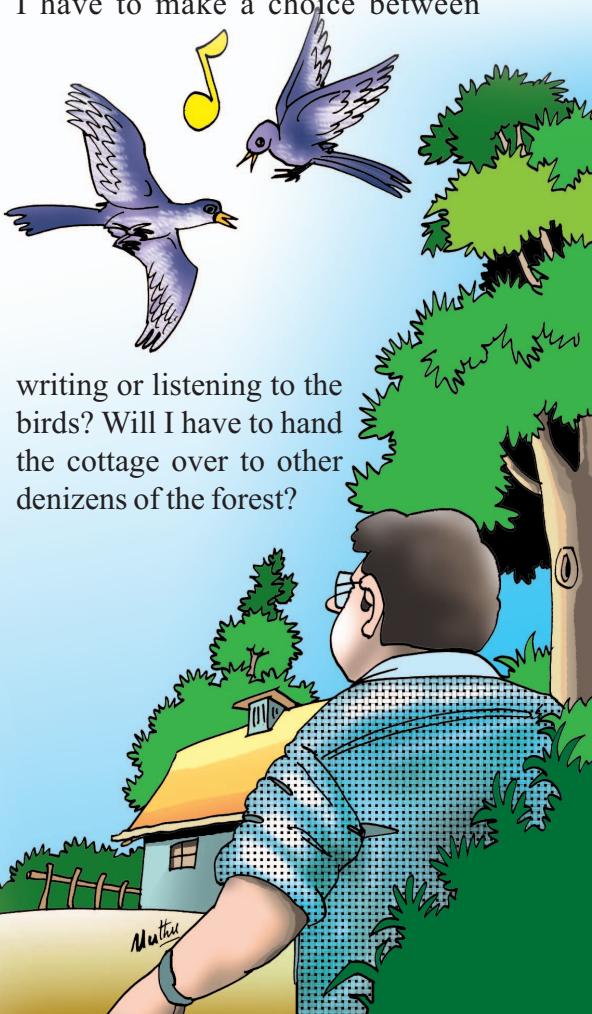
Well, of course, that meant I could not open the window anymore—the nest would have fallen over the ledge if I had. Fortunately the room has another window and I kept this one open to let in sunshine, fresh air, and the music of birds, cicadas, and the ever welcome postman.

And now, this very day, three pink, freckled eggs lie in the cup of moss

Chandamama

that forms the nursery in this jumble of a nest. The parent birds, both male and female, come and go, bustling about very efficiently, fully prepared for the great day that's coming about a fortnight hence.

One small thought occurs to me. The song of one thrush was bright and cheerful. The song of two thrushes was loud and joyful. But won't a choir of five whistling thrushes be a little too much for a solitary writer trying to concentrate at his typewriter? Will I have to make a choice between



writing or listening to the birds? Will I have to hand the cottage over to other denizens of the forest?

Who wrote Shakespeare's plays?

*"Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn the merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come
hither:
Here shall we see
No enemy
But winter and rough
weather."*

Thus sang William Shakespeare, one of the greatest dramatists and poets the world has ever known. He was born on April 23, 1564.

But did he compose this musical verse? Was he really the author of those 36 plays and 154 sonnets that are credited to him? Not everyone believes that Shakespeare actually wrote them! If so, who wrote the works attributed to him? Around 4,000 books have been written on this subject, trying to uncover the true identity of the creative genius behind the greatest works in English literature. The controversy has drawn many well-known names, like Mark

Twain, Walt Whitman, and Sigmund Freud who, among others, doubted if Shakespeare really wrote those works.

Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon, was in those days a small backward settlement in England, "shabby and unclean, and densely illiterate". His parents could not read,



could not write, and could not even sign their names. Shakespeare himself had very little education. He migrated to London in the nineties of the 16th century. Life was hard, and he had to devote much time to do work other than writing. There was no library where he could have studied history and consulted reference books which would provide him with source material for his plays.

His works, apart from their literary quality, show the writer's deep knowledge of politics, psychology, law, languages, history, and happenings in many countries. According to research scholars, there are between 25,000 and 29,000 words in Shakespeare's works. The average man's vocabulary is around 5,000

words. The King James Bible has only 6,000 different words in it. So, only a well-versed man of exceptional talents, living in comfort and carefree surroundings, could have produced such works of excellence.

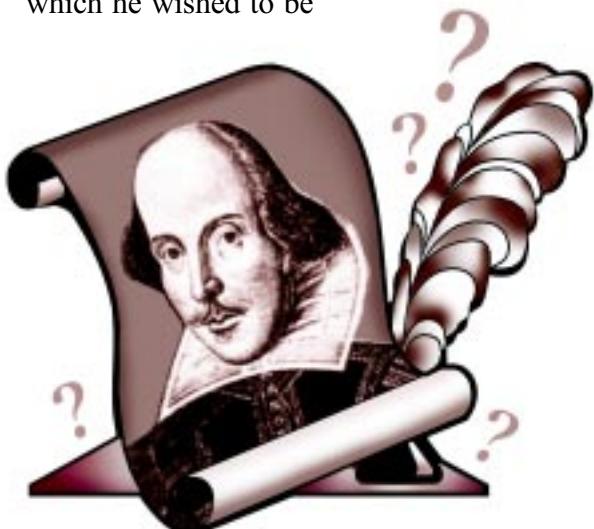
William Shakespeare was a gentleman and an actor. In 1593 his name appeared in the official list of players, and the following year he played before Queen Elizabeth I. He also had a knack for business and held shares in two theatres. Very soon he gained a reputation as an actor and manager of the stage. Meanwhile, his name, though variously spelt, became associated with a number of great plays as their author. But surprisingly, when some of them were pirated, he made no protest at all. Why? Were they not written by him?

Shakespeare was a very prudent man in worldly affairs. He made his will. In the will he did not forget to mention any of the things he possessed, but he makes no mention of the royalty or income that was expected from his works. Why did he not mention this?

Finally, when William Shakespeare died in Stratford-upon-Avon, in April 1616, "it was not an event. It made no more stir in England than the death of any forgotten theatre-actor would have made. Nobody came down from London, there were no lamenting poems, no eulogies, no national tears, there was merely silence and nothing

more.... No praiseful voice was lifted for the lost Bard of Avon," said Mark Twain. Why? Was Shakespeare not looked upon as a great writer by the people of his time?

According to Mark Twain, Shakespeare never wrote a play, not even a letter to anybody during his lifetime. But he wrote just one poem which he wished to be



Shakespeare

engraved on his tomb. His wish was fulfilled, and there on his grave it abides to this day in Stratford-upon-Avon:

*"Good frend, for Jesus sake forbeare
To dig the dust encloased heare,
Blest be ye man yt spares thes stones
And curst be he yt moves my bones."*

But one wonders, why Shakespeare's name does not appear on the grave, nor on the tombstone.

There are about 50 names that various scholars have put forward claiming that they were the real authors of Shakespeare's works. Like Christopher Marlowe, Sir Walter Raleigh, the Earls of Essex and Oxford, and Francis Bacon. Even Queen Elizabeth I and Shakespeare's wife, Ann Hathaway, find a place in the list of guesses!

But the question that arises in the mind is, why should someone else use Shakespeare's name for his plays and poems? Indeed, there must be some very sound reason for this!

The story goes that Christopher Marlowe, the other great poet and dramatist of the time, after writing some remarkable plays, suddenly disappeared in 1593! The following year William Shakespeare made his first appearance on stage in London!

Marlowe was also a detective officer under the service of Her Majesty the Queen. He wanted to expose a very influential man of some secret crimes. That notorious man lost no time in employing a professional murderer to finish off Marlowe. Fortunately, Marlowe's friends came to know of the plot. They spread a

rumour that Marlowe had been killed in the midst of a brawl with a drunkard in a tavern in Canterbury. Indeed, a young man *had been* killed, but he was *not* Marlowe. Meanwhile, Marlowe was quietly whisked out of England.

He is supposed to have settled down in Italy. There he wrote play after play and sent them to his friends in England.

Shakespeare was the shareholder and manager of the theatre. So, the plays were released very smoothly through him. It might be observed that because Marlowe lived in Italy, most of the Shakespearean dramas have the Italian backdrop as their settings.

So, was Christopher Marlowe the true author of Shakespeare's works?

As the great novelist Charles Dickens said: "The life of Shakespeare is a fine mystery, and I tremble every day lest something should turn up."

To this day nothing has so far turned up! The name of Master William Shakespeare, the good old Bard of Stratford-upon-Avon, still shines in the realm of English literature.



Marlowe



No time for quarrel

Meena somehow had earned notoriety as someone who would talk back if given an opportunity. She would just wait for a remark not palatable to her, and she would retort to his or her face, whoever had made that remark. Her parents were worried how she would behave when she got married and started living in a new home and along with people whom she would not have met earlier.

Her father and mother received quite a few proposals for the girl. While they were trying to match the horoscopes, one day they had visitors—Sukumar, his father Gopal, and his mother Madhavi, who wished to meet Meena. Her parents had already been alerted by their friends that Madhavi was a quarrelsome woman, while

Gopal was a decent gentleman, and their son a well-behaved boy, doing working as a school master in their village. He was, of course, the only child of his parents. They had a house of their own and a piece of land which they cultivated.

Meena and Sukumar liked each other. Their parents, too, thought the two would make a good match. Madhavi appeared to approve of Meena as her daughter-in-law. In short, the marriage was solemnised very soon. The invitees to the wedding, who knew the two families intimately, however, had some doubts in their minds: how would the quarrelsome Madhavi and arrogant Meena get on with each other?

After the wedding, Meena left for

her husband's house. As they saw her off, Meena's parents wondered whether she would not be back with them soon, after quarrelling with her mother-in-law. At Madhavi's place, her husband Gopal spent the days fearing when an alteration would take place between his wife and her daughter-in-law and whether Meena would be provoked to go back to her parents. Thus both families spent anxious days.

Strangely, nothing like that happened during the first week or the next, or for some months. Madhavi went all out to tell her friends in the village what a well-behaved girl Meena was and how she was fortunate in getting such a daughter-in-law. Meena, on her part, told her friends who used to call on her and the new acquaintances she made in her husband's village that she had not met such an affectionate lady like her mother-in-law ever before.

Finally, a day came when Meena had to go to her village to attend a temple festival. Whoever she met there was curious to know about her mother-in-law. Of course, she was all praise for the lady and told them how affectionate she was to her.

That night, Meena's mother confronted her. "Do you mean to say that Madhavi is so good towards you, that she has never found fault with you, and has never quarrelled with you? How fortunate you are, Meena!"



Meena did not retort for once. There was a trace of despair in her voice. "Mother, do you feel that way towards that lady, *you* of all people?"

"Why? Aren't you fortunate because your mother-in-law doesn't nag you, doesn't taunt you?" asked her mother, unbelievingly.

"How did you come to the conclusion that she does not harass me?" Meena countered.

"True, Madhavi is quite well known for her quarrelsomeness," conceded her mother.

"You know that well, don't you?" retorted Meena. "Yet, you don't have a good word for me for living peacefully with my mother-in-law!"

"Yes, it is difficult to get on with

such a lady,” Meena’s mother persisted, “that’s why I said you’re fortunate.”

“Then listen to me,” said the girl. “I shall tell you the truth. There’s no end to her harassment. But because of my goodness, I have been speaking highly about her to everybody. Unfortunately, my own mother does not realise the truth. I’ve just been wasting my breath.”

“So that’s the truth, isn’t it?” remarked her mother remorsefully. “I never knew, nor could I guess. All right, I shall meet her and give her a piece of my mind. After that she’ll never raise her voice against my darling daughter. Just wait.”

“Don’t bother,” said Meena. “My mother need only know of my goodness and my mother-in-law’s good points. I don’t expect anything more!”

However, her mother did not leave it at that. When she ran into Padma, a relation of Madhavi living in her village, she complained about Madhavi. Padma began to laugh uncontrollably. “Why do you laugh, Padma?” asked Meena’s mother.

“Your daughter and her mother-in-law are fit enough to be yoked to the same cart!” observed Padma. “They both are clever at pretence. I had gone to Madhavi only the other day and she was all praise for Meena, just to pretend that she herself is good. The two seem to be competing with each other in praising the other! Take it from me, there is no change in their character. Their aim is the same, that’s why they don’t get any time to quarrel with each other.”

Now, it was the turn of Meena’s mother to laugh aloud.



Know Your India

QUIZ

The Dutch, Portuguese, French, and the English at one time or another tried to establish their suzerainty over India for brief as well as long periods of time. And the people of India fought with them and forced them to leave the country. However, some individual foreigners loved India and served the people in many ways. Can you identify them?

1. A missionary from Britain endeared himself so much that people called him 'Deenabandhu'.
2. She hailed from Ireland, but made India her homeland. She supported the country's freedom movement. She headed an international movement headquartered in Madras (now Chennai).
3. The Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded by an Englishman in 1789. Who was he? What was his great achievement?
4. He was a Frenchman and he established schools in Calcutta (now Kolkata) and Lucknow.
5. An English woman became a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and assumed an Indian name.
6. Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhui, of Albania, was known in India and elsewhere in the world by a more popular name.

(Answers next month)

Answers to April Quiz

1. The National Flag
2. Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the Nation.
3. E.M.S Nambudiripad, one time Chief Minister of Kerala. He headed the first ever elected Communist government in the world.
4. In 1852. Called the Scinde Dawks, they were the first postage stamp issued by any country in Asia.
5. In 1931, to commemorate the inauguration of New Delhi. The three stamps depicted the Rashtrapati Bhavan, India Gate, and the Parliament House.
6. On February 18, 1911. Some 6,500 items were flown from Allahabad to the Naini Jail 8 km away.
7. Postal Index Number—August 15, 1972.
8. Eight regions.
9. In 1837, by enacting the first Post Office Act.
10. The India 4 Annas Inverted Head. There are only 24 genuine copies of this stamp which has the British Queen's head printed inverted.
11. Mahatma Gandhi.
12. In New Delhi.

Hell is not the place for a spree!

❖ Reader Jagakalia Biswal, of Durgapur, asks: *What is meant by 'to go out on the razzle'?*

If you 'go on the razzle', you go out and enjoy yourself in a lively and noisy way, perhaps in a bar, a pub, or a night club. Razzle-dazzle is a slang expression for a rowdy frolic or a spree where there can be some confusion, too. 'Razzamatazz' also has a similar meaning.

❖ Reader S. Sharmila, of Srikakulam, wants to know the meaning of the admonition "go to hell!"

As is commonly believed, hell is the place of the dead, a place where the wicked goes to receive punishment. 'Hell' is also the state of such punishment. When one admonishes another, asking him/her to go to hell, it only warns the person of an impending punishment that awaits him/her—anyway, not a happy proposition for anybody! A few other hellish expressions are—to hell with (indicating an angry disagreement) and what the hell (it does not matter). It's not always advisable to 'give someone hell' (to rebuke severely).

❖ I have not understood the meaning of 'in a state of mental doldrums', says Harshlal Agrawal of Malad, Bombay.

Doldrums is a state of inactivity or stagnation. Mental doldrums will, therefore, mean a dull, listless, depressed mood, or low spirits. 'In the doldrums' is the correct idiom. The expression 'mental doldrums' suffers from redundancy, as there cannot be 'physical' doldrums.

❖ What is meant by 'Luddite mentality?' asks Jyotirajan Biswal of Durgapur.

The expression 'Luddism' emanates from one Ned Ludd of northern England who went about smashing machinery in the first decades of the 19th century. Opposition to technological innovation has come to be called Luddism or a Luddite mentality.

Let us know



★ What is the origin of the *Arabian Nights* stories? Who told them?

-Roopalata Ghosh, Darjeeling

A cruel king of Arabia took a new wife every day, killing her the next morning. Sharazad was a Persian princess who became his wife. On their wedding night, she began telling him a story. She cleverly stopped when it reached the most exciting part and told the king that he would have to let her live to hear the rest of the story. She is believed to have narrated stories the next thousand nights. These stories were later compiled and came to be known as the Arabian Nights stories. The most popular among them are *Alibaba and the Forty Thieves*, *Sindbad the Sailor*, and *Alladin and the Magic Lamp*.

★ The Sumo wrestlers invariably are huge figures. Why?

-Pankajakshan Nair, Trichur

True, they are enormous in size. Some of them are nearly 1.83 metres tall and may weigh 130 kg or more. The bigger they are in build, they have greater chances of winning the bouts. Sumo wrestling is held in a small ring spread with sand. In a fight, a wrestler tries to down his opponent by forcing him to the ground or physically driving him out of the ring.

★ I am told spitting is an act of reverence in an African country. Could I know more about this?

- Rajasekhar Reddy, Nellore

This is a custom among the Masai tribesmen in Tanzania, where spitting is considered an act of reverence and an exhibition of goodwill. People spit on newborn babies to bring them good luck. Masais spit at each other when they greet and when they bid good-bye. Whenever two traders strike a deal, they spit at each other.

★ Where is the funny bone located in the human body?

-Ponnusamy Nadar, Salem

First, it is not a bone at all! It is a point on the elbow where a nerve comes very close to the surface, and so it is unprotected and, therefore, may get knocked at. The bone above it on the upper arm is called the humerus. Probably, someone clubbed the name and the nerve together and called it humorous or the funny bone.

A PICK FROM OUR MAIL BAG

By e-mail from Jagannath Sharma:

Chandamama is not just a monthly magazine; it is an institution. In fact, my wife remembers the Kannada edition she grew up with and one which the whole family waited for. And I myself owe whatever I know of Sanskrit to the excellent Sanskrit edition I was subscribing for many years. There must be several people to like me who have kept bound volumes of this wonderful magazine. I think, like everything else in these two or three decades, *Chandamama* needs to be marketed aggressively. Gone are the days when a magazine was known and bought only on the basis of its contents.

M.A.Majid, Hyderabad, writes:

The new look of *Chandamama* is simply superb. I like mythological stories. Towards Better English and Let Us Know columns are very helpful. Please start a pen pals column. It will be a pleasure to have communication with the readers of *Chandamama*.

By e-mail from Shyam Joshi, Los Angeles:

Thank you for the revised version of serial Yaksha-Parvat (Telugu *Chandamama*). We now look forward to reading Bhayankar Ghati.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Apart from the regular items, we have been giving to our readers special features off and on. Recently we marked the advent of a new century (and a new millennium) with a 4-part feature on what happened in India in the last hundred years. This issue carries a 16-page feature to coincide with the summer vacation which children (and their families) eagerly look forward to. We would like to hear from our readers their views about these features to guide us to think of similar features in the forthcoming issues. If they care more for stories rather than features, they need not hesitate to tell us so.

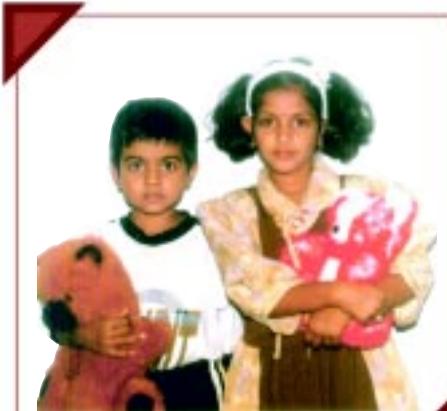
-Editor





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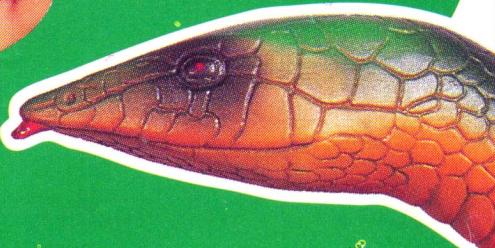
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